India in the Eighteenth Century

Dr. ISHWARI PRASAD, M. A., D. Litt.
Formerly Professor of History & Politics
University of Allahabad
Member of the Legislative Council, U. P. &
Itihas Shiromani (Nepal)



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Preface

As a teacher of History during my long educational career, I have had an opportunity of dealing with the whole range of Indian History as well as the History of all European countries. As a writer, I had to deal with the whole of Indian History and make a careful study of the events of what are commonly known as the Three Periods of History. My field of special research is mediaeval Indian History but I have kept my vision wide and have not ignored the other aspects of it. I have always liked a broader outlook and belived that narrow specialization leads to pedantry. A wider horizon in describing the event of the past is a valuable aid to a historian.

The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries are occupied with the rise, growth, glory, and affluence of the Indian Timurid Empire. In the last decade of the Seventeenth Century began the decline of the Empire owing to wrong policies, and towards the end of the century its fall became inevitable. The Eighteenth century began with the accession of imbecile kings and degenerate nobles who were powerless to keep together the Empire which was in the process of dissolution. The rise of the new races in the Empire itself made its rehabilitation difficult and the foreign invaders hastened its doom.

The signs of Hindu revival became manifests on all sides. The Jats the Marathas, the Rajputs and the Sikhs rose like a Phalanx to demolish the empire. The story of its decline and the rise of powerful caste-nations invests our history with a pathetic interest like that which inspired Gibbon to write the history of the Decline and fall of the Roman Empire.

In the present volume the story of the Eighteenth Century is unfolded with a view to acquainting the lay Reader and the professed Student of history with the forces that work to bring

about the fall of kingdoms and empires, and the habits and attitudes which lead to the degeneration of human societies. India is a country in which caste-groups have always existed and exercised a profound influence on her history. They teach us a lesson, warn us against the fatal results of political dis-unity and emphesise the necessity of foresight and wisdom in organizing the administration of the country.

The Eighteenth Century is sometimes described as the dark age of Indian History. The description is only partially true; there were great men and women in the eighteenth century, great rulers, warriors and statesmen but there was utter lack of unity and national patriotism. They concentrated their attention on their small field and neglected the larger interests of the whole country. They showed culpable readiness to sacrifice the whole for the part. Added to this lack of unity was the utter absence of nationlism, love of liberty, and regard for the rights of man and international morality and obligation. A state of confusion was created which made it easy for the foreigners to bring the whole country under their sway. Europe was under Enlightened despots in the Eighteenth Century. Indian rulers knew nothing about the modern methods of administration; they had not established even a printing press to print books or newspapers for the advancement of the people. At a time when the Half-civilized countries of Europe like Russia and pro-catholic Austria were introducing reforms and England was, as a result of the industrial revolution, was becoming the workshop of the world, Indian rulers were fighting among themselves, making room for the foreigners who were superior to them in diplomacy, state-craft and military organization. India became a congeries of States which, one by one went under the yoke of foreign traders and a large part of the map became Red. Such is the tragic story of India's history which is no pride to us and to write it without malice and bitter anguish of the soul is a difficult task.

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Ishwari Prasad

Contents

CHAPTER I

Decline and Fall of the Mughal Empire

The year 1700 marks an epoch in Indian History. Aurangzeb who was the ruler of Hindustan was approaching his end. Bigoted, and suspicious by nature, he was a master of the art of dissimulation and no one could fathom the depths of his heart. His policy was a failure. By conviction and temperament he was an orthodox Sunni Muslim, who had no faith in Akbar's principle of Sulah-i-Kul and looked upon religuous toleration as an act of folly and sin, His numerous acts of unwisdon fostered discontent throughout the country and his attempt to turn India into Darul-Islam provoked stiff resistance from the various sections of the non-Muslim population. He had many good qualities but they were neutralised by his fanaticism. According to the evidence of contemporary Muslim writers, he was a pious Muslim who followed the *Shara* and lived his life in conformity to the Muslim ideal. He hated the Hindus and Shias alike and wanted to turn our ancient land into an Islamic country. The Rajputs who had shed their blood in the service of the empire turned against him and became his bitterest enemies. The Marathas, Bundelas, Jats, Sikhs all turned against him and broke out into open revolt against his authority. The Hindus who were exasperated by his hostile and oppressive measures started a movement of revivalism in the country to withstand the tyranny of the state. From a beneficial organisation for the protection and well-being of the people, the empire became an outlandish engine of tyranny and the forces of disintegration began to work on all sides with redoubled vigour. It was the fanaticism of the Mughals that had called into existence the militant sect of the Sikhs, who from meek and gentle followers of Guru Nanak became fierce warriors, thirsting for the blood of their enemies and organised themselves in the Khalsa for the defence of the Hindu religion under the leadership of Guru Govind Singh, the tenth and last of the *Gurus*.

The prolonged wars in the Deccan had drained the resources of the empire and even after 25 years' continued warfare the resistance of the Marathas was not broken. After Shivaji's death his second son Raja Ram who was only 10 years of age was crowned at Raigarh by his mother Soray Bai in April 1680 with-

out thinking of the consequences of the act. Shambhuji who was confined in the fort of Panhala decided to seize the throne. He put the commandant of the fort to death and acquired possession of it. Then he went to Raigarh and with the help of Hambir Rao Mohite, the commander chief, set aside Raja Ram, threw him and his mother into prison, and declared himself as king. Shambhuji did not get on well with kis father's officers and employed in his service a Brahman from Kannauj, Kavi Kalash by name, who knew Sanskrit and also composed verses in Hindi. The Marathas looked upon him as a foreigner and resented his interference in the affairs of the state. The presence of two kings and the intrigues of the chiefs caused dissensions in the Maratha camp.

A new complication was introduced into the politics of the Deccan. Auranzeb's fourth son Akbar who had fled after the desertion of Rajputs in the war between them and the empire in the north went to the Maratha court to seek Shambhuji's help to enable him to seize the throne of Delhi from his father. Rummour spread in the country that Prince Akbar had gone to the south and the Emperor also marched in pursuit of him. The Prince was well received by the Marathas and a joint plan was formed to raid the emperor's camp at Aurangabad. This did not materalise and through Mughal manipulations, it seems, Shambhuji was involved in a war with the Siddis of jinjira and later with the Portuguese at Chaul. The Marathas were attacked by the imperial army and they were defeated. Shambhuji and Kavi Kalash both were captured and thrown into prison. Shambhuji was told that his life would be spared if he surrendered the forts, he had seized, disclosed his hidden treasures and the secret purposes with the Mughal nobles and officers. Although a prisoner in Mughal hands, the Maratha Chief became wild with rage, showered foul abuse on the Emperor and demanded his daughter in marriage as a condition of peace with him. The actual words were not communicated to the Emperor but only their substance. He was infuriated with rage and ordered Shambhuji and his adv ser both to be put to death in circumstances of exceptional barbarity in 1689.

Raja Ram now became King. He had received no education worth the name and had none of the qualities that go to make a great ruler. With his moderate abilities, he tried to rouse the national spirit of the Marathas and in this task he was aided by capable men like Ramchandra Pant and Prahlad Niraji who were his chief advisers. In his compaigns he was assisted by generals like Shantaji and Dhanaji, War with the Mughals became a national war and Maratha potriotism rose to the highest pitch. Ardent spirits rallied to the side of these great leaders and the

theatre of War extended from Burhanpur to Jinji in the south. Raja Ram transferred his capital to Jinji and the Marathas scoured the whole country and inflicted heavy losess on the Mughals. The siege of Jinji which lasted for eight years shattered the Mughal hopes of a complete subjugation of the Marathas.

Raja Ram left Jinji, went up and down the whole country exhorting the people to rise in the defence of their hearths and homes.

The condition of the Mughal army was pitiable. Sir Jadunath Sarkar Writes:—

> His soldiers and camp followers suffered unspeakable hardships in marching over flooded rivers, muddy roads and broken hill tracks; porters disappeared, transport beasts died of hunger and overwork, *scarcity of grain* was ever *present* in the camp and the Maratha and the (Berad) thieves (as he officially called them) were not far off. The mutual jealousy of his generals ruined his cause or delayed his success. The siege of eight forts, Satara, Parli, Panhala, Khelna (Vishalgarh, Kandhana (Sin-) garh), Raigarh, Torna and Wagingera, besides five places of lesser note occupied him for five years and a half (1699-1705) after which the broken down old man of eighty-eight retired to die."

After Raja Ram's death in 1700, his son Shivaji II was crowned as King and his widowed mother Tarabai became regent for him. Tarabai was a spirted woman of great administrative ability. She organised the government with great energy and in fused a fresh life and vigour into the administration. The Marathas, inspired by her noble example, carried on the War of independence till the end of Auranzeb's career. His twenty-five years' War had ended in misery and despair and the Marathas were still defiant and rebellious. They carried their raids into Malwa and Gujarat and obtained one victory after another and extended their rule as far as the south Karnatak. The credit for these heroic achievements end successful campaigns was due to Tarabai who was the forelorn hope of the country's resistance and the inspirer of her national ideals.

The Imperial army had suffered great privations and had consequently grown very weak, The Commissariat arrangements were entirely unsatisfactory. The expenditure of the army had grown enormously; it had become nearly double of that of Shahjehan. The French traveller Bennier writes from personal observation about the economic breakdown of the empire. He speaks of the recalcitrant attitude of Zamindars, the sufferings of the

rack-rented peasantry and the deplorable plight of artists and artisans who had migrated to the provincial capitals.

The decline of the administration was clearly discernible. Some of the great ministers and administrators had died and a great many in all parts of the empire had been incapacitated by age. The Muslim aristrocacy which was the principal feeder of the civil service of the state, had become degenerate, Luxury and the pursuit of sensual pleasures had sapped its strength and seriously impaired its efficiency and discipline. The sons of distinguished officials of the state spent their time in the company of eunuchs and fiddlers and possessed neither valour nor virtue. They took tokite flying and pigeon flying as their pasttime and felt an aversion for the business of office or administration. The administration in Northern India had virtually collapsed; while the old supporters of the empire were engaged in digging its grave, the provincial governers and Dewans, devoid of efficiency, discipline and probity, acted as they liked and the revenue fell in arrears. Autocracy defeats its own purpose. While the Emperor to whom they were responsible had become incapable of enforcing discipline, they lost their morale and began to avail themselves of the opportunity provided by administrative anarchy to enrich themselves at the expense of the state and the people. Law & Order were neglected and Hindu chiefs and Zamindars defied the the authority of the state and destroyed the semblance of local self-government in the rural areas. The regulations devised by Todarmal and Fathullah Shirazi about which Abul Fazl writes at length had gone into desuetude, and even the records were falsified. The Mughal nobility cultivated vicious and extravagant habits and lacked that moral grit and stamina which are required to build up great political systems. Pedarasty was a common vice and the dignity of family life was at a low ebb. Profligacy was the norm of life and was perhaps the aristocracy's reply to the emperor's stern Puritanism. The Mughal nobility was a hybrid conglomeration of differents races; it fomented rebellion, lived in a state of perpetual tension; it plotted against the Emperor and tried to bring about his dethronement. It did not see the writing on the wall and ignored the warning which destiny gave them of their impending doom.

When Aurangzeb returned to Wagingera (1705), he was completely exhausted. He slowly wended his way towards Ahmadnagar. So great was the *audacity* of the Marathas, according to the Muslims Chronilers that they followed him and raided his camp. Their tactics baffled the imperalists and they succeeded with difficulty in driving them away. Yet they persisted in their attacks from the rear and put the Mughal army to heavy loss. It seemed as if the decree had gone forth from the Most High

that the Empire must fall. Beaten, baffled and crestfallen, the emperor returned to Aurangabad where he died on March 3, 1707 A. D.

Nothing can describe adequtely Auranzeb's misery at this time. He was fortlorn and miserable, utterly devoid of the peace and consolation which domestic felicity alone can bring to a dying man. He did not trust his sons and never allowed them to come near him. The aged monarch's mind was haunted by the fate of Shahjehan whom he had kept as a prisoner for eight years in the fort of Agra and if he was truly religious, his mental anguish must have been unbearable, despite his austere temperament and pitiless nature. He had heaped indignities upon the most magnificent ruler of the Mughal dynasty, who was called Sahib Qiran Sani and caused the death of his own kinsmen. Verily he was now overtaken by Divine retribution.

Aurangzeb had threesons, Muazzam, Azam and Kambkhsha. He had made a will by which he partitioned the empire among his sons but they disregarded it and began to prepare themselves for the war of succession. As there was no fixed law of succession among the Mughals, the question had to be decided by the arbitrament of the sword. Muazzam heard the news of the emperor's death at Jajau and started atonce for the capital. Like Azam he also thought that Agra and Delhi would give him a great advantage over his rivals. Having seized the treasure at Peshawar and Delhi, he reaehcd Agra and appropriated to himself the vast treasures found in the fort. He wrote a letter to Azam asking him to avoid shedding the blood of God's creation and challenged him to a personal combat to decide the question of succession. Azam replied that the question of sovereignty was quite different from personal quarrels and two swords could not remain in a single scabbard. He crossed the Chambal at Dholpur where his son Bedar Bakht was encamped. The heat was terrible and the troops suffered heavily. The two armies engaged themselves in a battle near Jajau (not far from Agra) on the 18th June. Azam's son Bedar Bakht was a capable and brave man. He wanted to go to Agra but his father out of jealousy did not allow him to do so. The carnage on the battle field was heavy; and about 12000 horsemen were left dead and Azam and his son were killed with many of their supporters. Bedarbakht's brother Walajah was mortally wounded. Many of the Rajputs on either side died fighting for him and most of the Muslim officers were also killed. Azam lost heavily and Bahadurshah obtained a complete victory.

Having got rid of his powerful rivals, Bahadurshah turned to Rajputana and from there proceeded to the Decan on hearing of

Kambakhsha's cruel and mad acts. While he was on his way to Bijapur whither he was sent as Viceroy, he heard of the death of his father and proclaimed himself as Emporer and stayed for two months, taking steps to organise his army and the government. But his acts of folly and the bitter jealosy that existed between his minister Taqarrub Khan and his Bakhshi Ahsan Khan made him blood-thirsty and he became a tyrant. He confiscated the property of officers whom he suspected of conspiring against him and imprisoned them. Many other acts of cruelty were done by him and the people were tired of his tyrannical ways. Matters came to a head, when he tortured to death Rustam-dil-Khan, the Viceroy of Golkunda. At this time Bahadurshah crossed the Narbamd on the 17th May, 1708 and sent to his erring brother, a reasonable offer of peace which was rejected by him. It became necessary for Bahadur Shah to put an end to his tyranny. Many of Kambakhsha's followers and supporters deserted to Bahadurshah and in a Skirrmish that followed, the small force of 350 men which he had gathered was defeated by the imperialists who numbered 25000 under the command of Munim Khan and Zulfiqqar Khan. Having settled the Deccan affair, Bahadur Shah returned to the north to deal with the serious situation that had arisen in Rajputana.

The Rajput chiefs of Jodhpur, Amber and Mewar had combined against the Emperor after Aurangzeb's death. Ajit Singh had recovered his ancentral provinces and expelled the Muslim Faujdar Mihrab Khan. Jai Singh, the Prince of Amber, had married his daughter to the Rana of Udaipur for the purpose of strengthening the alliance. The Rajputs surrounded Jodhpur and reduced to sore straits the Muslim Faujdar who was allowed to retreat with honour. After a good deal of fighting, order was restored and peace was made with the Rajputs. Jai Singh and Ajit Singh were taken back into the imperial service. The Latter was given a command of 3500 and the title of Maharaja was conferred upon him. Bahadur Shah paid a second visit to Rajputana in 1710 and by his conciliatory policy won the loyalty and support of the Rajputs. Just at this time came the news of the trouble caused by the Sikhs in Sirhind and the emperor turned to deal with them. With the accession of Bahadur Shah to the throne, therelationsof the Mughalswith the Sikhs had changed for the time being. Guru Govind Singh joined the service of the Emperor and received a Mansab. He is said to have taken part in the battle of Jajau though it has been much exaggerated by the Sikh writers. Guru Govind Singh was killed by a fanatic in 1708 and he was succeeded by Banda who is sometimes called 'false Guru'. Banda established himself near Sirhind and gathered a large following. He had at his command 40000 men who were mostly recruited from the lower classes.

He attacked Wazir Khan, the governor, who had murdered Guru Govind Singh's children and killed him.

The death of Wazir Khan spelled disaster for the inhabitants of Sirhind, The town was given up to plunder and a terrible vengeance was exacted from the Muslims in 1710. The most terrible cruelties were prepetrated and even women and children were not spared. Encouraged by these depredations, the Sikhs caused much disturbance at Lahore, drove out the local governor and raided the parganas of Batala and Kalanaur. The news of these outbreaks reached Bahadur Shah at Ajmer towards the close of May but owing to differences between the King and his ministers no action could be taken. The villages in the vicinity of Lahore were plundered and the Muslims organised themselves to expel the Sikhs. The Sikh devastation continued all over the contiguous lands and the Saharanpur and Meerut districts were revaged. The Sikhs were strongly entrenched in their forts and the Muslim resistance was not of much avail. Banda had escaped from Lohagarh which was captured by the imperialists but it was lost again, and in the fighting that followed, the Sikhs displayed amazing spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion.

Bahadur Shah was terribly annoyed on hearing of the discomfiture of the imperialists. He started from Ajmer on 27th June, 1710 to deal with Banda who was at Sadhaura. The latter atonce, left the place and fled to the Fort of Lohagarh. The Imperialists were strengthened by re-inforcements under the command of Prince Rafiusshan, Munim Khan, Chatrasal Bundela and other Rajputs. Fighting with the Sikhs continued, and the only event worth noticing is the Khutba riot at Lahore which occurred in 1711. The Emperor suggested the addition of the word 'wasi' or heir after the name of 'Ali in the Friday prayer. As this meant reflection on the three caliphs, the Sunnis who constituted the majority protested against the innovation and riots broke out in several places. Bahadur Shah ordered his artillery officer to arrange for the reading of the changed Khutba but a hundred thousand Sunnis gathered in the streets and a riot seemed imminent. The emperor had to yield and the agitation came to an end.

Bahadur Shad been strenuously busy since his accession and his health was declining. He fell ill and after few weeks he died on 27th February. 1712.

After a brief struggle for succession, his son Jahandar Shah succeded to the throne. The scene of conflict among the sons of the Late King was in the Punjab. Jehandar Shah proclaimed his assumption of imperial dignity in an improvised audience hall in the battle field outside Lahore on the 29th March, 1712.

Zulfiqar Khan became the chief Wazir and received a Mansab of 8000 Zat and a large sum of money. The officer of Dewan was conferred on Ikhlas Khan, while the revenues of the Khalsa were entrusted to the care of Sabha Chand who was given the title of Raja. Other officers were similarty honoured and became the receipients of Royal favour. The Princes of the Royal family were defeated or killed.

Freed from all rivals Jehandar Shah began to rule as Emperor. He turned out a dissolute sensulist and pleasure-seeker. He spent most of his time in the company of his concubine Lal Kunwar and drove with her in a bullock-cart to Chandni Chowk to make purchases. He was surrounded by buffoons and jesters of a low type and with them he indulged in every kind of frivolily and vice that can debase the dignity of man. By his unwortly conduct the king threw all decency to the winds. The highest dignitaries of the Empire were insulted by Lal Kunwar's relations and royal extravagance reached to such an extent that the stores of the Palace were exhausted and even the cold and silver on the ceilings of the royal apartments was stripped off and given to the soldiers who clamoured for pay. Lal Kunwar was given an allowance of 20 millions of rupees a year and in addition to this huge amount clothes and jewels and other costly things were supplied in abundance. The tone of society became vulgour and the prestige of the administration reached its nadir. There were parties at the Court the most powerful of which were the Iranis headed by Safdar Jang and the Turanis headed by Nizamulmulk.

While Jehanandar Shah was immersed in pleasure and entirely neglected the business of the state Farrukh Siyer, the second son of Azimushan, proclaimed himself Emperor at Patna. With the help of Saiyyed brothers, Hasan Ali Khan and Husain Ali Khan. They came from Barah a group of 12 villages in the Saharanpur and Meerut districts and were known for their bravery and administrative ability. Both rose by dint of merit to high position in the State and during the reign of Alamgir the elder Syed was Faujdar of Sultanpur Nazdarbad and the Subah of Khandesh and was afterwards given the charge of Aurangabad. The younger brother was a man of remarkable intrepidity and vigour. He held charge of Rantam bhor and then of Hindaun and Biyana in the Subah of Agra. They were at Multan for sometime but owing to differences with Priuce Muizuddin, the eldest son of Snah Alam, they resigned and went to Lahore where they remained for sometime in obscurity. They took part in the battle of Jajau and fought on the side of Bahadur Shah but after his accession to the throne they felt that their service had not been adequately recognised. Bahadur Shah

gave the Subah of Ajmer to Abdulla but soon after changed his mind. Azam extended his patronage to them.

Sayyid Hasan Ali Khan was made Deputy Governor at Allahabad and Sayyid Husain Ali Khan who was given the title of Amir-ul-umra, Firoz Jung, at Patna. Jehandar Shah asked his son Azduddin to March against Ferrukh Siyer from Agra but the prince who was aggrieved on account of his supersession by Lalkunwar did not promptly obey the royal command. Distribution of offices followed and new provincial governors were appointed to strengthen the Emperor's position. Abdus Samad was given the charge of Lahore, Jai Singh Sawai of Malwa, and Sayyid Khan in Jehan Barah of Ajmer. The governorships of Multan and Behar were entrusted to the Sayyid brothers. Bengal was given to Mirjumla but in reality it was Murshid Quli Khan who was asked to govern it in addition to the province of Orissa. The provinces of the Deccan were entrusted to Nizamul-mulk (Chin Qlisch Khan Bahadur) with his head quarters at Aurangabad, The Nizam was the ablest man among all these officers and he wasthe leader of the Turnai party, which consisted of men who had loyally served the Timurids and looked upon themselves as their countrymen. They came from the country north of the Oxus and many of them were employed in the army. As has been said before, the Iranis were opposed to the Turanis and each faction tried to acquire predominance in the State.

Jehandar Shah was alarmed by the advent of Farrukh-Siyer His great handicap was the scarcity of money, Dire necessity led him to distribute the jewels and other valuable articles of gold, vessels etc. among the soldiers ro satisfy them. But even these did not suffice to meet their demand. It was Jehandar Shah's misfortune to be the leader of such a rabble He was at his wit's end to find ways and means to meet the enemy who had crossed the Jamuna and encamped at Serai Roz Bahani near Akbar's tomb at Sikandara.

Both sides prepared for battle and on the 10th May, 1713 near Agra the imperialists were defeated. The Sayyid brothers fought with unexampled courage and gave a short shrift to their enemies. Husain Ali Khan was found beneath a heap of corpses but when he heard of victory, he rose atonce and rejoiced over the results of the battle. Desertions began in Jehandarshah's army and even his ministers opened negotiations with Farrukh Siyer. The Sayyids had triumphed; Jehandarshah was captured and fetters were thrown round his feet. After a few days he was strangled to death and his head was cut off. Confusion spread all-around and the stability of the administration was seriously undermined. There was a fresh distribution of offices and new men

were admitted to royal favour. Raja Chabila Ram Nagar was sent to Agra but as he could not get on with Churaman Jat, another officer was appointed in his place. Though power was in their hands, the Sayyid brothers did not misuse it. The lion's share of gifts and rewards went to the king's favourites most of whom were Turanis.

The Saiyyids occupied the position of king makers but they were not free from danger. The Emperor was perfidious and was planning to overthrow their power. He plotted but his innate cowardice hampered his plans. Mir Jumla's constant intrigues to create a cleavage between the Emperor and his ministers succeeded and the latter became openly hostile and defiant. But in the end Farrukhsiyer's courage failed and he patched up a truce with Abdulla in a most abject manner. The intrigues, fears and jealousies had disturbed the peace of the state and the Turanis and Iranis were making a bold bid for power. There were many foreigners in the country who were employed in the artillery branch and they added to the confusion of the time. They were looked upon with distrust by the native Musalmans. They claimed as the lawful candidates for power rewards and offices. Among them were the Sayyids of Barah who were supported by the Jats and Rajputs who held smaller posts in the administration. The officers of the Revenus department who were mostly Kayasthas, Banias and Khattris supported them and shared their hopes and fears. The Hindustanis from the West despised those from the East and the chronicler's outburst is amusing and instructive :

> "God created the Purbiyah (easterner) without shame, without faith, without kindness, without heart malevolent, niggardily, beggarly, cruel, ready to sell his children in the bazar on the slightest provocation; but to spend a penny he thinks that a crime equal to matricide".

There was another cause which divided the nobles of the court. The friends of the Wazir were hostile to the Emperor and *vice versa*. How could there be proper and efficient administration in a state of this kind in which the execution of policy was hampered by the intrigues of selfish and unscrupulous adventurers.

Mir Jumla, who had become the Emperor's confidential adviser was secretly driving him on to the Path of disaster and ruin. He held before Farrukh Siyer's blinking eyes the grim spectre of the Saiyyid brother's plan of placing another prince of the royal family on the throne. To checkmate this plan, he suggested a wholesale murder of these princes. To a frightened monarch

who was foolish and ficklemined, the court minions pointed out in their private conclaves the necessity of getting rid of the king-makers. Nobles and ministers, suspected hostility,, were got rid of. Asad and Zulfiqar were permitted to wait upon the Emperor who advised Asad to go away. Zulfiqar was subjected to unspeakable indignity and then he was strangled to death. The houses and property of Asad and Zulfiqar were confiscated. Asad was placed under serivellance and he spent the remaining period of his life under vigilance. The foreign elements in the state had caused utter confusion. The Emperor was powerless to check their rivalry and, in their mad race for power the Indian Muslims were overpowered by their rivals, who were intellectually superior to them and were past masters in the art of political intrigue and nefarious underhand activities.

While the court was in such a distracted condition, firmness was shown in dealing with the Rajputs, Jats and the Sikhs. The Rajputs, writes Khafi Khan, did not show proper allegiance and therefore Husain Ali Khan and the Emperor's maternal uncle, Shayasta Khan were sent against Ajit Singh of Marwar. Secret letters were sent to the Rajput Chief to resist with all his might the force sent against him and take steps to kill the imperial general. Husain Ali made a vigorous attack upon Ajit and defeated him. A treaty was made by which the Raja agreed to pay the tribute and marry one of his daughters to Farrukhsiyer. His son Abhay Singh was to go to Delhi with Husain Ali and he himself agreed to attend the court when he was called upon to do so. The marriage of this princess was celebrated on the 17th December, 1715.

The Sikh Guru Banda was still at large. He had built a strong fortat Sadhaura and from there his followers commanded the entire area. Banda came out of Lohagarh and ravaged the whole country and harassed the inhabitaints. They bravely defened themselves against the Delhi force but their supplies being exhausted they escaped from the fort and took shelter in the mud fort of Gurdaspur. A fiercce battle raged round this fortress and the Sikhs fought with desperate courage and showed amazing valour. But in the end they were defeated by the imperial general Abdus Samad who brought the Guru as a captive to Delhi where he was executed with with great barbarity in March, 1716. Having dealt with the Sikhs, the imperialists turned towards the Jats. Thep had given not a littile trouble to the empire since Aurangzeb's day. Their depredations continued unabated in the territory near Delhi and the contiguous tracts of land. The Jat chief Churaman who entrenched himself in the fort of Thun was made to surrender after a siege of twenty months. He agreed to pay 50 lakh of rupees in carh and goods and to secure his good

will the Emperor granted him the right of the royal highway from Bharahpul near Delhi to the ferry on the Chambal river. The treaty was finally ratified on the 30th April, 1718. The Emperor was displeased with Jai Singh of Amber who was sent against Churaman and Qutubulmulk satisfied his old grudge by asking the Emperor to order the cessation of hostilities.

The Emperor distrusted the Saiyyid brothers and was anxious to bring about their ruin. He employed several persons to bring about this result but they were found hopeless and incompetent. Even Nizamul Mulk was thought of for planning a coup against the Saiyyids but he was thoroughly disgusted with court intrigues and left without making an attempt.

Farrukhiyer hit upon another device to destroy the Saiyyids He planned a counter revolution and wanted to set up a group of nobles to oppose them. Iniyatullah Kashmiri who had been previously dismissed was re-appointed as revenue minister ostensibly to re-organise the administration and remove the abuses that had crept into it. He revived the Jeziya and ordered an enquiry into the titles and tenures of Jagirdars. This drastic action was resented and the Khalsa Dewan Ratan Chand and other Hindus protested against this action and the Wazir refused to agree with the Dewan, Khafi Khan who approves of the Jeziya writes:—

"This was very distasteful to Ratan Chand and other revenue officials. They addressed themselves to Abdullah and he was oppossed to the issue of the order. All the Hindus were greatly enraged because of the order for collecting the Jeziya and of the advice about the cutting down of the mansabs."

Then another cunning Kashmiri Muhammad Murad who talked glibly about his own ability came forward to execute the Emperor's plan. Several other attempts were made but they failed. Relations between the Emperor and the Minister became highly strained. The Wazir made appointments of unfit persons to responsible posts. The revenue fell into arrears and the business of the State was neglected.

Farrukh Siyer continued his ruthless campaign against the Minister. He bestowed favours upon worthless persons like Muhammud Murad (the Kashmiri who has been referred to before) whose rank was raised to 7000 and squandered the treasures of the State to gratify the wishes of such impostors. Mir Jumla was also called to join this vile crew and the court became a scene of intrigue, conspiracy and corruption. The Emperor formed a plot to murder Abdullah at Id prayer but the plan fizzled out.

In this predicament the Minister called his brother Husain Ali Khan from the Deccan. In the meantime, he strengthened himself by conciliating his opponents. Ajit Singh and Jai Singh were reconciled to him and Nizamulmulk was also won over. Husain Ali exerted himself with great tact and foresight to obtain the support of the Marathas. He left Burhanpur on 14th December, 1718 and gave out that he was escorting Aurangzaeb's fourth son Akbar who had been made over to him by the Maratha Raja Shahu. He had under him an army consisting of 25000 cavalry, 10,000 musketeers and artillery. Besides these, he had with him two Maratha commandants Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath and Khanderao Dābhāde having under them 11,000 Maratha Soldiers. A treaty was made with Shahu by which Husain Ali promised him Chauth or one-fourth of the revenue of the Deccan and Sardesmukhi or ten per cent on the collections Husain Ali Khan further promised to obtain from the imperial government the confirmation of Shivaji's hereditary dominion and the release of Shahu's mother and half brother who were detained as prisoners at Delhi. On being apprised of the State of affairs at the Court, Husain Ali disguised his real intentions and outwardly had a warm exchange of greetings with the Emperor. Qutbul Mulk met the Emperor and began to talk about his perfidious conduct. This was too much for him and he shouted in impotent rage and despair: 'If I am a true son of Azimushshan and a real descendant of the Sahib Qiran (Timur), I will impose retribution for these uncalled for deeds and this unmeasured audacity. I will have the lands of the Baraha ploughed by asses, and mice thrust into the trousers of their women. The Wazir was beside himself with wrath and began to shower disrespectful and filthy abuse on the Emperor. He accused the latter of ingratitude and perfidy. Husain Ali saw the king on 23rd. February. The latter concealed himself in the harem from which place he was dragged out by the Afghans with blows and abuses to the Minister who had him blinded and dethroned and imprisoned in the room over the Tirpoliya where Jehandrshah had ended his life in miserable captivity. The partisans of the Wazir guarded the palace and allowed no supporter of Farrukhsihyer to enter it. Rafiud-darjat, a son of Rafiushshān, was proclaimed king. He was a puppet in the hands of the Sayyids. The most sordid traits of the Sayyid character were revealed in these disgraceful scenes. They quarrelled over the booty in the palace and it was through Ratan Chand's intercession that peace was made between the brothers. Abdullah who was an uxorious person had already appropriated to himself the beautyful inmates of the royal seraglio. In the pursuit of their mad ambition, the king-makers never paused to consider that tyrants and miscreants fall by the very methods which help them to rise to power.

In dealing with Farrukhsiyer the Sayyids went to the extreme. To imprison him after depriving him of his eyesight was an atrocious act which admits of little justification except the plea of self-preservation.

'Feeble, false, cowardly and contemptible' is Mr. Irvine's verdict on Farrukhsiyer and, it is impossible either to admire or regret bim'. Refiddaarjat a son of Rafiushshan was made King but he was a weak, sickty, consumptive yonng man who could not carry on the duties of a king. He was deposed and his elder brother Rafiuddowlat (June 1719) was declared as Emperor under the title of Shah Jehan II. Rafiuddowlat did not live long and the Sayyid brothers placed Raushan Akhtar, son of Jahan Shah (the fourth son of Bahadur Shah) on the throne under the title of Muhamad Shah on 28th September 1719.

The new Emperor was confronted with a difficult situation. The empire was pulled to pieces like a child's map and every where the centrifugal forces were working to bring about its complete disintegration. The Sayyid brothers were still very powerful.. Jafar Khan ruled as Viceroy over the provinces of Bengal, Behar and Orissa. The six provinces of the Deccan were held by Husain Ali Khan who was assisted by his nephew Alim Ali Khan. Ajit Singh of Jodhpur, who was friendly to the Sayyids had the charge of Gujarat and Ajmer besides his own territories. Malwa was held by Nizamul-mulk, who was the leader of the Turani party and who longed to see the destruction of the power of the Sayyids. Chabila Ram was in charge of Allahabad and being a supporter of Farrukhsiyer, he was hostile to the Sayyids. He died suddenly in 1719, His nephew Girdhar Bahadur did not follow his father's policy. He was offered the governorship of Oudh and was asked to surrender the fortress of Allahabad. But he delayed compliance with this demand on various pretexts. Some of the chiefs of Rajputana were also restive and wanted to strengthen their position.

The Sayyid brothers quarrelled over the spoils of Agra and wanted a just and fair division. A compromise was made by which Husain Ali Khan agreed to surrender twenty lakhs of rupees to his brother but the loss of money rankled in his mind and brotherly relations between the two ceased to exist. Abdulla's agent Ratan Chand was given enormous power and by mis-using it he offended both the nobles and the people. Girdhar Bahadur was persuaded by Ratan Chand to reduce the fortress of Agra.

Nizamulmulk by consolidating his position in the Deccan, had prepared himself for an encounter with the Sayyids. The Turani faction desired the restoration of its former power and

dignity. Many nobles who were tired of the Sayyid regime wanted to free themselves from their yoke and their designs were seconded by Qudsiya Begum, the mother of the fallen Emperor.

Nizamulmulk's suspicions that his life was in danger were confirmed by his recall from Malwa. He was asked to choose any of the governorships of Agra, Allahabad, Multan or Burhanpur. His cousin Muhammed Amin kept him informed that his ruin was contemplated and that he should guard himself against all eventualities. Nizamulmulk prepared himself for defence and secured the Deccan. He crossed the Narbada and took possession of the fort of Asirgah. Burhanpur was soon occupied and Dilawar Ali Khan, the commander of the Sayyids, was defeated at Khandwa. The situation became very eritical when Alim Ali, Husain' Ali's deputy, in the Deccan, was defeated and Slain.

Nizamulmulk's victory gave a blow to the prestige of the Sayyids and put Husain Ali Khan on his mettle. He started for the Deccan with the Emperor, knowing nothing about the conspiracy that had been formed against him by Amin Khan, a leader of the Turani party, Mir Muhamad Amin, a Persian adventurer and Haider Quli, an artillery man. When he was encamped at Toda Bhim (in the Jaipur state) he was presented with a pettition by Haider Beg, a trooper in Amin Khan's force. Husain Ali Khan, who was in a palanqin, and had just returned after paying homage to the Emperor, began to read the petition. Haider Quli Beg siezed the opportunity of thrusting his knife into hisside and then dragginghis bodyout of the palanquin he sat upon him and began to cut off his head. He was dragged down from the litter and his head was cut off. Husain Ali was got rid of but the Emperor and his mother were frightened out of their wits. They became anxious for their own safety and were appalled by tha grimness of the event. Ratan Chand was caught hold of and thrown into prison.

The Sayyid's camp was plundered and his treasure was seized. His head was fixed on to a pole and was shown to the multitude to convince them that the *major domo* of the palace had been done away with. Nizamulmulk was asked to return to the north immediately.

Abdulla, when he heard the newss resolved to wreeack vengeance on the murderers of his brother. He wrote a letter to the Emperor asking him to take action against the culprits. The weak-kneed Emperor denied all knowledge of the conspiracy and promised to punish the miscreants. Md. Amin Khan was appointed Wazir, his rank was raised to 8,000 and he was given the title of Itmad-uddowlah. He placed on the throne Ibrahim, a

brother of the two emperors Rafiudowlat and Rafiuddarjat. This was done on 4th October, 1920.

Abdulla now collected a large army. Money was lavishly spent and the roving blades of the country side and ruffians from the city were recruited in large numbers and his force consisted of 100,000 men nearly twice as large as the army of the other party. Both sides prepared themselves for action. A battle was fought near Hasanpur (13th November 1720). At first the Sayyid host seemed to win but the bravery of Haider Quli the imperial artillery officer carried the day and the enemy was defeated. Seeing the howdth of Abdulla's elephant empty the soldiers took to flight and many deserted to the other side. Abdulla's heart was filled with dismay and he is reported to have said to his brother Najmuddin: "Look at the fricklesses of fortune, and the transitory nature of all earthy pomp and power. Both surrendered to Haider Quli who took them to the Emperor The *roi faineant* whom the Sayyids had placed on the throne was pardoned on the ground that he was a tool in the hands of the Sayyids. He was sent back to his prison and an allowance of Rs. 40 per day was granted to him. Abdulla was confined near the royal apartments and was poisoned on 11th October, 1722. Orders were issued to lay waste the Barah country but the Sayyids offered a stubborn resistance and 'broke the teeth of the Mughals., The Wizarat was offered to Nizamulmulk but pending his arrival the duties of the office were entrusted to Inayatullah Khan. When Nizamulmulk arrived, he was formally appointed Wazir.

Such was the tragic end of the king makers of Delhi. If they had exercised power with moderation, they might have survived the fearful catastrophe that overtook them. They were proud and vain and gave offence to all parties at the Mughal Court. Husain Ali Khan was haughty and egotistical and flatterers told him that the whole creation sought shelter under his umbrella and he seemed to like this sort of adulation. Once he proudly declared that 'on whomsoever the shadow of his shoe fell could be the equal of Alamgir. They were greedy and rapacious and when occasion arose they had no hesitation in ordering plunder and rapine. The Emperor was unworthy of the royal office but they went too far in humiliating him, and by their policy, they systematically destroyed his prestige. Their favourites and hangers-on like Ratan Cand advised them to take measures which were not only scandalous but highly detrimental to the interests of the state. Khwafi Khan who is by no means friendly to them points out their good qualities.

"Both brotherss were kind to the poor and needy and patronised learned men. They were liberal in their outlook, appointed Hindus to high posts and their pro Hindu policy gave not a little offence to the ortho dox section. The elder Sayyid though easeloving and uxorious was a man of kind and affable temper and tried to be just to those who laid their complaints before him. Like his Hindu fellow citizens he observed Basant and Holi and had no prejudice against colour-throwing".

The fall of the Sayyids was inevitable. They did nothing for the public well-being; they devised no laws or institutions which would have conduced to the stability of the government or the progress of the country. They cannot be said to have been successful party leaders; within their own party there were dissensions and they were aggravated by the duplicity of the Emperor. The Society in which they lived and which they were called upon to lead was degraded by sensuality and crime. The men who occupied the highest positions in the state were devoid of any kind of principle or morality and behaved like criminals. By their intrigues and treachery they hastaned the fall of the empire which they pretended to save. They did nothing to check the corruption which was rampant at the court and were themselves so greedy and rapacious that they fell out over the spoils which came into their hands. Alamgir used to say about the Sayyids of Barah:

"Undue favour to the Barah Sayyids will be disastrous in both worlds. For when promoted or exalted they say: I am and there is no other' and stray from the path of public duty. The tone of court was so debased and the morals of the courtiers were so low that no discipline could be enforced in their ranks. When Nizamulmulk, who was bred in the austere traditions of Alamgir, came to See the Emperor, he advised him not to waste time on pleasure and be more sober and dignified. All advice fell flat upon the luckless monarch and the vile insects of the court. When the Wazir left, they indulged in buffonery and amused themselves with the remark, 'See' how the Deccan monkey dances'. The Emperor enjoyed the caustic wit of his lackeys, utterly oblivious of the consequences.

Was the fall of the Sayyids disastrous for the empire? As we read through the wearisome chronicles of the time, we feel how incapable they were of establishing any kind of order, how utterly powerless to check the minions of the court and how profoundly and pitiably incompetent to improve the tone of the Emperor and how short-sighted in dealing with party leaders and provincial chiefs. Even Nizam-ul-mulk, the tallest tree in the garden, was, as Sir Wolseley Haig rightly observes, mean enough

to free himself in the South by encouraging the Marathas to extend their ravages to the northern provinces of the empire. It is difficult to agree with Owen's view that judged in the light of subsequent history, perhaps, the fall of the Sayyids was a misfortune. They had not the statesman's capacity to organise an efficient administration with the help of the Hindus and Indian Musalmans and save the country from the calamity of of Nadir Shah's invasion. They did not act like statesmen; they were selfish and unprincipled and behaved like adventurers in a dissolving society.

Nizamulmulk wes appointed Wazir, but pending his arrival from the Deccan Inayatullah Kashmiri was appointed to officiate for him. Nizamulmulk reached Delhi on 5th July, 1723 but he found the court in a deplorable condition. His locum tenens did not give him power and Nizamulmulk had only his title but without the authority which his office implied. Muhammad Shah had rapidly deteriorated. He took no interest in public business and merely passed orders on petitions and prayers. The tone of the court became more depraved and the protests and disapproval of the Nizam availed nothing. The wrong-doers could not be diverted from their vicious path. The Wazir advised the king to pay more attention to administrative problems. He asked him to give up the practice of farming out lands, to stop the bribery that was rampant at the court and to remove the Jaziya on the Hindus so as make good the financial deficiency of the state. The courtiers made fun of the Minister. ridiculed his dress and manners. The king turned a deaf ear to his advice and, thoroughly disgusted with the atmosphere of the court, he left Delhi on a shooting campaign. Qamaruddin Khan was appointed Wazir, and the Emperor was persuaded to send secret instructions to Mubariz Khan, one of Husain Ali Khan's supporters, who was governor of Haiderabad, to whom the Nizam had shown kindness, to bar his entry into the Deccan.

In May 1724 the Nazam met Baji, Rao at Nalcha for the third time and they exchanged friendly greetings. They did not disclose their real intentions to each other.

When Nizamulmulk reached Aurangabad in June 1724, he found that Mubariz was hostile to him and had got together a latge army to oppose the Wazir. Nizamulmulk proceeded to deal with him and in the battle of Sakharkhera, 80 miles from Aurangabad; in Berar. Mubariz Khan was defeated and killed with two of his sons and two other sons were taken prisoners. Sakhar Khera was renamed Fatah Khera to commemorate the victory of Nizamulmulk. This battle marks the establishment of Nizamulmulk' hereditary power in the Deccan. Mubarez Khan's

head was sent to the Emperor with a letter of apology in which he said : 'with your blessings have succeeded in bringing about the death of this traitor;' He sent congratulations to the Emperor on the victory and then marched to Haiderabad which he made his capital. The Emperor to make the best of a bad job tried to conciliate him by confering upon him the title of Asaf Jah. If the congratulations were ironical, the conferment of the title was humiliating to the Emperor in the highest degree.

The administration of the Empire was in a deplorable condition and ministers and officers were appointed and removed on the advice of the courtiers. Nizamulmulk now set up an independent state (an imperium in imperio) and his principal preoccupation was to check the growing influence of the Marathas. At Delhi there was much confusion. Qamaruddin Khan was appointed Minister and Girdhar Bahaduer was sent to Mawla to check the activites of the Marthas. There was no security of service and the highest officers felt unsafe. They were changed with kaleidoscopic rapidity and several instances can be given of the arbitrary manner in which action was taken by the state.

Sarbuland Khan was a victim of royal caprice. He hoped to be minister in place of Nizamulmulk and waited for the order which was never received. He did not leave promptly for his new charge. In 1725 under pressure from the court faction he was sent as Governor of Gujarat. The Marathas invaded again and they were driven away by Sarbuland's army. It was so large that it was difficult to maintain it without aid from the centre which was refused. His enemies at court made his victory over the Marathas an excuse for reducing the strength of the army and urged the Emperor to stop his subsidy. Sarbuland was dismissed from service and imprisoned on the charge that he had agreed to pay chauth and Sardeshmukhi to the Marathas. After sometime, he was pardoned and appointed governor of Allahabad but he was so sorely disappointed that he hesitated to go and sent his son as his deputy. He was once again appointed to the government at Allahabad in May 1736.

Another instance of imperial tyranny is furnished by the case of Muhammad Khan Bangash. He was an Afghan adventurer who had carved out a small principality for himself in the Doab in the region of the modern Farrukhabad district. In 1725 he was appointed governor of Allahabad and found himself confronted by a powerful league of Bundela Rajputs who dominated the whole of Baghelkhand and the adjoining territory. He fought against them incessantly and it will be tedious to give an account of the battles fought and the sieges undertaken. In 1729 the Marathas

invaded Bundelkhand and Baghelkhand and Muhammad Khan was forced to take shelter in the fort of Jaitpur. He was relieved by his son Qaim Khan but it was merely a relief operation. Muhammad Khan was still in the grip of the Marathas who, before releasing him, extorted a promise from him that he would never again appear in the territory of Bundelkhand. He was dismissed from Government. In 1735 he was re-appointed governor of Allahabad and was dismissed again after six months. Corruption had become a part of man's lives at court. Men in the highest offices mis-appropriated public funds with impunity and accumulated enormous wealth. The morale of the state had completely gone down and there was no hope of redemption.

The inroads of the Marathas into Mughal territory were renewed every year from 1731 onwards, and in 1734, they captured the town of Hindaun. They continued their raids and extorted money from the people. In 1735 they sacked the town of Sambhar, expelled the Commandant, and killed the Qazi at the door of his house. The Emperor was powerless and at the instance of Jai Singh he recognised Baji Rao as governor of Malwa.

Baji Rao who had a large army under his command was in serious financial straits. His troops and creditors pestered him for payment. Taking advantage of the Emperor's imbecility and incompetence he suggested a settlement according to which :

1. he was to be given Malwa and the territory south of the Chambal and the cities of Allahabad, Banaras, Gaya and Mathura.

2. he was to be accepted as the hereditary Sardeshmukhi of the six provinces of the Deccan.

3. he was to get an annual grant of 50 lakhs of rupees.

The Emperor was completely unnerved by these exorbitant demands and he appealed to Nizamulmulk for help. Nothing stirs man's conscience like misfortune and the senseless monarch prayed for an attitude of '*let by-gones be by-gones,*' to save the empire from ruin.

Khan Dauran and Qamaruddin were entrusted with the command of two armies and they marched towards Ajmer. Burhanulmulk (Saadat Khan) crossed the Ganges and reached Bhadawar whose chieftain was besieged in his fortress by Malhar Rao. The jealousy, treachery and folly of imperial officers again frustrated the possibility of a concerted plan.

Nizamulmulk also moved to the scene of action. His son Ghaziuddin Khan was appointed governor of Gujarat and Malwa and he was commanded to expel the Marathas from these provinces. He entered Malwa and encamped at Sironj. In the meantime Baji Rao had also returned to Malwa.

Nizamulmulk reached Bhopal and the two armies fought an indecisive enagement on 17th January, 1738 near Sironj. Baji Rao forced a convention upon the imperialists by which :

(1) the whole of the Malwa region was to be given to the Marathas in full sovereignty over the country between the Narbada and the Chambal.

(2) and a subsidy of 50 lakhs of rupees was to be given.

These terms were sufficiently disgraceful. We do not know what the humiliated Niam felt about them. There was nothing for him, and Baji Rao who in search of new fields of glory and self-aggrandisement, was pleased to have an independent state in the territory between the two rivers, with the empire on one side and the Maratha State on the other.

While the struggle between the Marathas and the Mughals was going on, news came that Nadirshah was *planning* to invade India.

Condition of the Empire

The Empire was fast distintegrating and the authority of the Mughal was defied everywhere. The Marathas gave the Nizam much trouble and he saved himself from their attacks by inducing them to make incursions into the Mughal territory in the north. Baji Rao carried his raids up to Delhi and demanded Chauth from the Emperor. The provincial governors paid nominal allegiance to Delhi and became independent. Saadat Khan Burha n-ul-mulk turned his province into an independent state. Bengal, Behar and Orissa had formed themselves into a single province in the time of Bahadur Shah and were ruled by Azimusshan Jafar Khan who acted as his deputy held charge of the three provinces till his death in 1726. In the outlying parts of the empire the authority of the Mughal had ceased to be respected.

Nadirshah's original name was Nadir Quli. He was born of poor parents. His father Imam Quli Beg has been variously described as a shepherd, skinner, agriculturist and camel-driver. Mirza Mehdi's well-guarded expressions clearly show that he was a man of humble origin and had risen to eminence by dint of merit. Mehdi's words are :

'A sharp sword owes its existence to its temper rather than to an iron mine whence its raw material was taken'.

Nadir Quai Beg was a Turk and he was proud of his blood and never sought to magnify the status of his parents. His early life was full of adventure and daring acts of robbery. He was carried away to Tartary by the uzbegs weo kept him as a prisoner for four years. In Perssa the decline of the safavis brought about a dynastic revolution which gave Nadir Quli an opportnity which he coveted. Shah Tahmasp II was a week ruler. He was overthrown by Mahmud Khan Ghilzai who conquered Herat, Khorasan, and Isfahan and drove the Safvis into the wilds of Mazandaran. The Turkish and Russian invasions added to the misery of the Persians who were already much harassed and persecuted by the Afghan usurpers of their country. In these circumstances of misery and humiliation Persians needed a leader who could rescue them from such national degradation and bondage. Nadir Quli was the man who came forward as the deliverer of his nation. As Irvine writes, "the national deliverance of Persians was the work of Nadir alone and naturally the enthusiasm of the people for him was unbounded,". The last king of the Safavi dynasty Abbas III was a weak man, who was unable to combat the enemies whose covetous eyes were fixed on his country. Quli was asked to wear the crown and he became king under the title of Nadir Shah on the 26th February 1736. He successfully repulsed the attack of the Russians and Turks. He captured Herat aud Balkh and then proceeded to Qandhar which fell on 24th March, 1738. He had sent envoys to the court of Delhi asking them to prevent the Afghan fugitives from crossing into India. Favourable replies were sent but no action was taken. Nadir moved to Kabul which came into his hands on 29th June. Passing through the Khaiber he moved on to Peshawar and then proceeded to Labore. Twelve miles awayfrom the town the governor offered resistance but he was defeated and the next day he appeared before Nadir and offered submission.

It is difficult to analyse the motives of a foreign invader with precision but a few observations seem to be pertinent. In all probablity Muhammad Shah's inability to close the frontier was a mere pretext. The Delhi Court, sunk in sloth and debauchery, did not realise the gravity of the danger. It is said they ridiculed the idea of such an invasion. The Emperor sent no satisfactory reply to Nadir's remonstrances about the Afghan refugees and the last envoy was detained for one year without any reply and this must have fearfully annoyed him. That Nadir was ambitsious has never been doubted and contemporary evidence confirms the view that he cherished the desire of following the example of

Alexander the Great and Mahmud of Ghazni and hoped to earn the title of world-conqueror. He wanted a large army to enable him to march to the Bosphorus and for this he must find recruits in foreign lands. He thought the conquest of Hindustàn would not only furnish a valuable recruiting eround but place at his disposal abunant wealth to help him to findnce his expedition against the Uzbegs. The fascination of India's riches was irressitible. The Persian treasury was depleted, and he hoped that the wealth obtained from India would satisfy his financial needs.

At first the Imperial Government at Dethi and its advisers did not attach much importance to the rumour about Nadir Shah's invasion. But when he captured Kabul, and defeated the Governor at Lahore, a panic was caused and there was a feeling of consternation. Even in the face of a national disaster, the leading noblemen could not unite and form a concerted plan to meet the invader. Ghulam Husain describes the condition of the government thus:—

> "The government was rotten, the Emperor was powerless. No money was sent to maintain the administration in Afghanistan. The Subahdar, therefore, sought his own comfort and lived at Peshawar, entrusting the fort at Kabul to a Qiladar with orders to control and watch the passess leading to India."

The frontiers had always been a source of danger to the empire add from Akbar to the time of Aurangzeb efforts had to be made to guard it. After Aurangzeb's death the frontier was neglected. There were no great generals like Mansingh to look after the safety of the frontiers. Ability, valour and knowledge all were wanting. No one at Delhi knew anything about the roads and passes in the mountainous contry. There was no warden of the Marches like Ghazi Malik in the 14th century who had driven back the Mongols on several occasions. The central Government was powerless to exercise any effective supervision over the local governors and they acted as they liked. Their resources were wholly inadequate for meeting a grave emergency if it ever arose or for maintaining an efficient administration. The troops at Kabul were not paid in time and the pressing requests of the Subadar remained unheeded. The Punjab was also undefended and there was nothing to check an invader who advanced from Kabul to Lahore. The local governor wrote again and again to Delhi about Nadir Shah's approach but no reply was received. His enemies at court mis-represented the situation. The Emperor was weak and dissolute utterly devoid of any principles or policy and the society around, deba.

uched and depraved, was completely in the grip of degeneracy and decay. There was no patriotism or national feeling wich could rouse the officers and the citizens of the State to unite against a common foe. Treachery was rife at court. The Turanis, Persians and Hindustanis were divided among themselves. The Delhi officers had carried on treasonable correspondence with Nadir Shah, as is evident from the words which he spoke to Muhammad Shah when Muhammad Khan Bangash was introduced to him. 'Brother Muhammad; said Nadir Shah, "You have three faithful servants. These are Nasir Khan, Khandauran and Muhammad Khan, the rest are all traitors. They have all written letters to me inviting me to invade Hindustan."

In this hour of danger Muhammad Shah appealed to all his nobles and jagirdars. He summoned Nizamulmulk but his advice was not listened to owing to the jealousy of Khan Dauran the Wazir. Sadat Khan delayed to come and he started to join the Emperor at the end of January, 1739. Even Baji Rao Peshwa was thought of, but the ecclesiasties of the court were not to accept help from an infidel. So critical was the situation. Appeal was made to the chiefs of Rajasthan but there was no response. Aurangzeb's policy had lacerated heartsand dried up all sympathy. Meanwhile Nadir Shah continued his progress towards Delhi and reached Karnal. His intelligencers and scouts brought him a good deal of information about the imperial army and its strategic plan. It is said Nadir Shah knew all about Burhanulmulk and his movements and the activities of the court.

The command was at first entrusted to Nizam-ul-mulk and Khan Dauran but they expressed their unwillingness to lead the army. Then Muhammad Shah led the army himself and reached Karnal. The imperialists mustered in large numbers but they were no match to the hardy warriors from the northern regions. They were badly defeated and suffered heavy losses. As Sir Wolseley Haig writes 'melee was a massacre rather than a battle. Burhanulmulk was recognised by an acquaintance from Nishapur and he dragged him into the howdah of his own elephant. Khan Dauran was mortally wounded and died the next day. With his dying breath he said to the trembling courtiers who surged around him that the only way to save the throne was to buy off the invader and make him retire.

Burhan-ul-mulk who coveted the office of Wazir now Judged it a good opportunity to offer his mediation. He paid a visit to Nadirshah and persuaded him to leave Muhammad Shah on the throne of Delhi and accept an indemnits of twenty millions of rupees. Nizamulmulk was sent to confirm this settlement and

on his return he was given, the title of Amir-ul-umra. Burhan-ul-mulk's jealousy was roused and he informed Nadir Shah that twenty millions was a very insignificant amount and he could bring out of his own house an equivalent sum although he was only a provincial satrap. Such was the rapacity of the Turkish bandit in Nadir and he withdrew his acceptance of the indemnity previously agreed upon. It was to be finally decided later.

Causes of defeat

The defeat of the Indian army was mainly due to three causes: (1) bad generalship, (2) old fashioned weapons, (3) and their strategy and mode of fighting. Nadir's Soldiers were Turks capable of strenous fighting and enduring provations. They were equipped with fire-arms and they were trained under strict supervision. The fire which was discharged by their swivel guns brought about deadly destruction in the ranks of the enemy and made it impossible for them to return the attack.

The Indian Soldiers were not accustomed to the use of fire-arms. The only musketeers who could use fire-arms were the Hindus of Buxar, the Bundelas and Karnatkis but they were not employed in the army of the Later Mughals. Babur had defeated the Afghans and Rajputs on the plains of Panipat and Khanua early in thc 16th cenury with his artillery and cavalry. The Indian Ordnance were heavy and were inferior to those of Persia and Turkey.

The Indian army lacked mobility. The Persians like the Turks of Central Asia who came with Babur, had a fine cavalry; they rode on swift horses and could quickly move from one position to another. Not so the Indian soldiers who wcre unused to horses, and who followed the old method of hand to hand fight, and still had faith in archery. The use of elephants was a handicap rather than an advantage. They had becn used in the past by the Rajputs in many battles but the result was defeat and destruction. Irvine righily says that they were a sure engine of self-destruction when ranged against Nadir Shah in thc year. 1739.

Morc important than all this is the spirit which anomates the fighting corps. The Turks were fu.l of buoyancy and vigour and longed for battle under a eapable leader who had given proof of his prowess in a number of campaigns. The Indians were weakened by their own dissensions and were enervated by luxury and indolence. The leaders were jealous of one another and were incapable of evolving a concerted plan to oppose the encmy. Those on whom the safety of the empire depended were

guided by cunning and treacherya and had no scruples in resorting to questionable ways to realise their selfish ends. The Emperor's name evoked neither respect nor enthusiasm and the army of flatterers and sycophants around him created such a vicious atmosphere that even the biggest men were not honest and straightforward even in conducting negotiations with the invaders.

After the battle when Saadat Khan (Burhan-ul-mulk) was brought before Nadir, the latter talked contemptuously about the resources of the Emperor. Saadat Khan replied with characteristic lack of facts and figures that the Emperor had vast resources and his nobles and grandees possessed abundant wealth. Nizamul-mulk was sent to negotiate a settlemont. An agreement was made that an indemnity of 50 lakhs of Rupees would be paid-20 Lakhs at atonce and 10 lakhs on reaching Lahore and 10 lakhs at Attock and 10 at Kabul, Nadir Shah sent an invitation to the Emperor to dinner through Nizam-ul-mulk. He was detained in the camp and this caused much uneasiness at Delhi. Burhan-ul-mulk also died after his returu from Nadir Shah's camp. He had paid before his death 23 million rupees and a force was sent to his nephew and son-in-law Safdarjung who had succeeded him to the *mesnad* to pay the 20 millions he had promised, Safdarjung paid the whole sum in cash and valuables consisting of jewels, and articles of gold and silver. The Emperor had already surrendered to him the keys of the treasury of the state and placed the entire wealth of the Empire at his disposal.

Nadir Shah entered Delhi with Muhammad Shah and took his seat in the Dewan-i-Khas. The Persian army guarded the fort and encamped near it and also occupied quarters in the city.

While the meeting was going on in the palace, there was a quarrel between the citizens of Delhi and the Persians, and a rumour spread that Nadir Shah was dead. Two Mughal officers, with a force of 470 men, went to the royal stables and slew the Persians who were in charge of the elephants. They were brought before Nadir and after a brief interrogation were put to death. This infuriated Nadir and he ordered a general massacre of the guilty inhabitants.

The chronicle writes·

> "They now hastened with drawn swords to wreak vengeance. Within the doomed areas, the houses were looted, all the men killed without regard for age and all the women dragged into slavery. The destroyers

> set fire to many houses and several of their victims, both dead and wounded, Hindus and Muhammadans were indiscriminately burnt togcther".

The slaughter began about 9 a. m. and went on till 2 p. m. About 30,000 persons were slain. Then Muhammad Shah, through his Wazir and the Nizam begged Nadir Shah to stop the slaughter and the latter gave the order that it must he stopped.

One authority writes: "Many respectable Indian householders slew their own wives and daughters to save them from dishonour by the Qazilbash soldiery and then rusbed on thc enemy's swords or cut their own throats. Many women drowned themselves in the wells of their houses to escape a shame worse than death. But many more were outraged and dragged away as captives, though according to the Persian Secretary Nadir afterwards ordered them to be restored to their families."[1]

Nadir remaincd in Delhi till the 15th May and during the two months he stayed in Delhi, he proclaimed himsclf the lord of Hindustan and had the Khutba read in his name in all the mosques of Delhi. He held the durbar after the Mughal fashion and sumoned the nobles and asked them for contributions. The process of squeezing the nobles of their wealth went on and the Emperor was also asked to disgorge all his jewels, pearls and diamonds and valuablc vessels of gold and silver. The famous diamond the Koh-i-Nur was demanded and also the peacok throne of Shahjehan which had cost 2 crores of rupees. The well-to-do citizens were also forced to pay two crores. Anand Ram was asked to pay 5 lakhs and a military guard was posted at his house to enforce payment. It appears that all citizens were subjected to this levy and none was allowed exemption. Anand Ram writes:

> "Helpless people, high and low, rich and poor, were compelled day after day to attend at the law court where they were kept from dawn to sunset and often till one prahar of night without ascertaining the truth, the calumnies of Mir Waris and Khwaja Rahmatullah were believed. The lists were prepared. The contributions of capital totalled two crores of rupees".

Payment was rigorously enforced. Delay led lo insult and torture. The high officials were entrusted with the task of collections. Some of the nobles were treated with the great cruelty and had to suffer torture and indignity.

Nadir Shah behaved as king of Delhi. Coins were struck in his name and he took thc title of Shahanshah. Muhammad

1. Irvine, Later Mughals II, p. 369.

Shah had to live lik a subordinate and a prisoner and his condition was most degrading and pitiable.

Nadir Shah left Delhi on the 16th May. The wealth carried by him is differently estimated by different historians. The grand total given by Frazer is 70 crores besides 300 elephants, 10,000 horses and about the same number of camels. Anand Ram who was employed with the Wazir, gives 60 lakhs of rupees and some thousands of gold coins and nearly one crore of Rupees worth of gold wares, nearly 50 crores worth of jewels; most of them unrivalled in the world.?[1]

Sri wolesely Haig, in Cambridge History Vol. IV, gives the following details :

> "Different authorities estimated the cash alone at amounts varying from eight to more than thirty million sterling, besides jewels, plate, cash, stuffs and other valuable property. The conqueror also took with him, a thousand elephants, seven thousand horses, ten thousand camels, a hundred eunuchs, and a hundred and thirty writers, two hundred builders, a hnndred masons. and two carpenters".[2]

Before the departure in a grand Darbar held on 1st May he summoned the Emperor and his nobles. To the nobles he presented robes of honour, jewelled swords and daggers, horses and other gifts. He placed with his own hands the Crown of Delhi on Muhammad Shah's head and two jewelled swords round his waist.

How wretched and degraded the Emperor was is clear from the following words in which he is said to have expressed his gratitude to the tyrant who humiliated him and tortured his subjects :

> "As the generosity of the Shahanshah made me a second time master of a Crown and a throne and exalted among the Crowned heads of the world, I beg to offer as my tribute the provinces of my Empire west of the river Indus, from Kashmir to Sindh, and in addition to the Subah of Thatta and the ports subordinate to it".

Shades of Akbar and Alamgir what they must have felt on hearing this declaration had better be imagined than described.

1. Irvine, Later Mughals, Vol. II, p. 371.
2. Cambridge History IV, p. 363.

No greater punishment could have been devised for the imbecile and sinful Muhammad Shah. But Nadir Shah too did not live long to enjoy the wealth he collected in India for he was assesinated after 8 years.

Effect of Nadir's invasion of India

Muhammad Shah's defeat and disgrace snapped the bonds that had kept the Empire together. The effect of bad policies became clearly discernible and everywhere signs of dis-satisfaction became manifest. To use Sir Wolseley Haig's words 'The Emperor and his courtiers were stupefied with the blow that had fallen on them'. All intrigues and base designs were drowned in the disgrace which had befallen them. For a few months no administrative business was transacted, and Muhamad Shah sank in his usual lethargy and inaction, and it was after nearly seven months, that he revived his machinations to destroy the power of the Turani party. Acting on Nadir Shah's advice, that he should beware of the Turanis and their leader Nizamulmulk, he wanted to appoint Umdatul-mulk in place of Qamaruddin Khan, who had earlier resigned his post, on the Nizam's advice to destroy the influence of the Turani faction. Qamaruddin left Delhi to join the Nizam and Umdat-ul-mulk was asked to make peace with the latter and Qamaruddin. Thus the plot to overthrow the Turanis failed and the Nizam stayed to watch the trend of affairs at Delhi.

The empire had shrunk in diamensions. The tendency on the part of provincial governors to become independent was on the increase everywhere. Safdarjung, nephew and son-in-law of Burhanulmulk, became independent in Oudh and in the six subahs of the Deccan the Nizam exercised *defacto* sovereignty, and by overthrowing Sarfaraz Khan by treachery, Alivardi Khan established himself at Murshidabad on 12 May as Viceroy of Bengal, Behar and Orissa. Zakariya was confirmed in the Punjab and Multan, which had been held by his father Khan Dauran up to the time of the battle of Karnal.

To the north-west of the Doab now called Uttar Pradesha, was founded a new principality by a Rohilla Afghan leader Ali Muhammad by name, who was employed in the service of the governor of Katehar. Gradually he gathered a large following, and taking advantage of the disorder that prevailed in the empire, he increased his power and by giving shelter to the Afghans became their leader. Ali Muhammad kept to himself the revenues of the Jagir of Qamruddin Khan and when the latter appointed Raja Harnand to audit his accounts, he took offence and killed the Raja and became virtually independent. The tract

over which Ali Muhammad exercised his authority came to be known as Rohilkhand.

In 1745 Muhammad Shah marched against the Ruhilla Chieftain who was conducting himself as an independent ruler. The emperor was helped by Nawal Rai, Safdarjung and Qaim Khan, son of Muhammad Khan Bangash. Ali Muhammad, seeing the odds against him, submitted and on Qamaruddin Khan's intervention he was pardoned and entrusted to his custody,

The Marathas were advised by Raja Shahu not to meddle in the affairs of the Empire, but Peshwa Baji Rao I who was a man of imperial ambitions carried raids into the Mughal territories to the very confines of Delhi and burnt the suburbs. His occupation of Malwa was recognised by a treaty between him and Nizamulmulk and it was ratified by the Emperor. Baji Rao was a remarkable man. He was a warrior, a born leader of man and a statesman. For 20 years he dominated the Maratha state and brought about a great change in Maratha policy which became the outward symbol of his expanding soul. He fought many battles, and gave a short shrift to his enemies and levied chauth and Sardeshmukhi upon them. Even the Mughal empire did not escape from his ravages and the emperor was compelled to accede to the demand of Chauth and Sardesmukhi. Wherever his arms penetrated his enemies were worsted and a large number of centres of Maratha influence were created all over India. Assisted by his brother Chimnaji, who was equally brave and warlike, he carried his conquests far and wide and turned the small Maratha kingdom into a powerful state, ready to try conclusions with the Mughal Empire. Baji Rao's military triumphs made his fame reverberate throughout the country, and there was no court in India where his name was not mentioned with respect and fear. Raghuji Bhonsle of Nagpur made incursions into Bengal, Behar and Orissa and along the Orissa Coast and levied Chauth and Sardeshmukhi upon the inhabitants.

Gujarat was, like Malwa and Bundelkhand, troubled by the Marathas and difficulty was always experienced in finding governors for this turbulent area. During the inefficient rule of Jodhpur, the Delhi government did not care much about it and found it difficult to organise the administration on account of the interference of the Marathas.

The States of Rajputana had become quite independent. Abhay Singh of Jodhpur was appointed as Governor of Gujarat but he failed to manage the affairs of that province. The grim spectre of recurring Maratha invasions caused a state of chronic anxiety and it was found difficult to obtain help from the im-

perial government at Delhi. Sawai Jai Singh of Amber who held charge of Agra remained loyal to the last and ruled over the province for 44 years. He was a friend of Peshwa Baji Rao and enjoyed his confidence. Through Jai Singh's mediation many difficult problems were settled between the Empire and the Marathas· Jai Singh was worthy of his high position. He was a trustworthy friend, a great scholar and lover of Hindi literature and was interested in astronomical studies.

In 1740 Baji Rao Peshwa died at the age of 42. He was a masterful figure, who according to Sardesai, was next only to Sivaji in military genius. He became Peshwa at the age of 19, and for 20 years, ceaselessly waged war against his neighbours and made incursions into the Mughal territories right upto Delhi. It was due to Baji Rao Peshwa, writes a modern Maratha historian that a revolution was made in the character of the Maratha state and the political centre of gravity was shifted from the court of Delhi to the South.[1] It is true much of Baji Rao's energy was wasted in keeping under control the recalcitrant elements at home but this was inevitable. He gave a new direction to the policy of the Maratha state and, under his inspiring leadership, his colleagues and commanders followed him to seek fresh fields and pastures new.

Sir Richard Temple, who is a foreign writer, pays a rich tribute to Baji Rao:

> "He was moved by an ardour for success in national undertakings by a patriotic confidence in the Hindu cause as against its old enemies the Muhammadans and its new rivals the Europeans then rising above the political horizon. He lived to see the Marathas spread over the Indian continent from the Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal. He died as he lived in Camp under canvas among his men and he is remembered among the Marathas as the fighting Peshwa, as the incarnation of Hindu energy."[2]

Sahu Chatrapati died in 1749. Baji Rao's relations with him had been harmonious. Tne Maratha leaders met in a conference at Sangala and it was decided that all official work should be removed to Poona. The Peshawa was to have the entire executive authority of the state. He was to be the head of the confederacy which consisted of Sindia, Holkar, Bhonsle and Gaekwad. It was a great change. Sardesai call it the *Revolution of Sangala*.

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1. Sardesai, History of the Marathas 11, p. 182.

Muhammad Shah's incompetence in matters of administration is revealed in a number of important transactions. He was weak and incapable of taking a firm decision. Umdat-ul-mulk held an important position at court. But by his indiscreet behaviour he brought trouble on himself One day he was talking about some business of the the state with the Emperor who was tired of his interminable harangue and asked him to postpone the discussion to another day. The chief eunuch who was present remarked that the matter was as endless as the chater of two old women. This gave offence to Umdat-ul-mulk who protested but the Emperor, though he had promised to dismiss the eunuch, disapproved of Umadat-ul-mulk's insolent behaviour when he was gone, instead of punishing the impertinent eunuch. He permitted the latter to hire a ruffian to make away with Umadat-ul-mulk. On January 6, 1747 the latter was stabbed to death as he was entering the hall of audience.

A revolution in Persia brought about a new situation and created a serious danger for India. As Nadir Shah advanced in years, he developed the habits and temper of a tyrant and he was murdered in his own camp on June 2, 1747. Power was usurped by Ahmad, his Chief Cammander, who belonged to the Sadozai section of the Abdali Tribe. Through Nadir's favour, he had risen to high command with the help of his own tribesmen and some Qazalbash soldiers, captured Herat and brought Qamdhar and Afghanistan under his sway. Treachery was rife among men of high rank in India in those days, and in collaboration with Shahnawaz Khan, governor of the Punjab, Ahmad Shah Abdali, now Shah of Persia, formed a scheme of invading India but when the time came for actual help, the governor hung back and Abdali was left to his own resources. He crossed the Indus with 30,000 horse and invaded the Punjab. After a show of resistance Shahnawaz's force was overpowered and he was compelled to seek refuge in flight. On hearing of Abdali's advance towards Delhi, the imperialists under prince Ahmad and some other redoubtable leaders marched to meet the invader. Abdali bypassed the Delhi army and reached Sarhind which was sacked and every man who could take part in fighting was put to the sword. The artillery, arms and ammunition of the Delhi army were captured by the Afghans and used by them against their opponents. By a sudden explosion which occurred near the camp, many of the invaders were killed. But Ahmadshah did not leave the field and during the night ordered his men to retreat to Afghanistan. The imperialists rejoiced over this seeming victory and returned to Delhi. This was Abdali's first invasion.

At Panipat Prince Ahmad received the news that Muhammad Shah had died of dropsy at Delhi on 26th April. He was immediately proclaimed Emperor in the camp under an umbrella and post-haste marched to Delhi where in the Shalamar garden, outside the capital city, after three days (29 April 1748), he was crowned emperor of Hindusan.

Muhammad shah's inglorious reign had come to an end and we may look at the Indian scene with wondeing eyes and ask ourselves the question: who was responsible for this decadence? The answer is obvious. It was Aurangzeb's policy that had sown the seeds of decay and disintegration and created a situation-which his successors were powerless to control. All over India, a number of kingdoms had come into existence which exercised sway over large and extensive territories. They have been mentioned before. The empire had become a mere shadow of its former self and its writ was respected only over a very small area. In assessing the contribution of factors leadind to disintegration, the army must be given an important place. True, the men who sat on the throne of Akbar and Aurangzed disgraced it by their unmanly conduct, imbecility and debauchery and showed a conspicuous lack of capacity for administration or generalship. Past history was dis-regarded and the system of assignments was revived which produced its bad effect on the organisation of the empire. As the monarchy declined in character and importance, the power of the nobles incressed, and the occupant of the throne lost touch with the army. He wielded no commanding influence or possessed the ability to offer guidance to his troops. There was no line of demarcation between the civil and military departments. They were combined and men who passed most of their time at court were asked to lead important campaigns. The officers were jealous of each other and were often swayed by party spirit. The canker of party had eaten into the vitals of the administration and from its ravages neither the civil nor the military administration was free. High placed officers who also acted as generals and commanders told lies, intrigued freely and made subterranen plans to undermine the imperial authority. A highly placed officer like Nizamulmulk encouraged the Marathas for the saftey of his dominion in the South and a governor like Safarjung gave to a foreign invader an exagegrated account of the wealth of the Emperor and his nobles and asked him to employ coercion and extortion to make them yeild up their hidden treasures. Even the Saiyyid brothers had looted the treasure of the state and quarrelled over its appropriation. There were governors who were so treacherous as to encourage foreign invaders to invade their country. Treason was rampant among the high ranking officials

and in the conduct of campaigns against an enemy much reliance was placed on treachery, bribery and negotiations.

Aurangzeb was himself a great general and commander but he had done nothing to organise and strengthen the military system of the empire. We read of no schools or seminars for military training and the Muslim youths from very early age developed a fondness for the pleasures of the seraglio. Discip line became lax and Aurangzab's long wars in the Deccan for 25 years damped the eothusiam of the nobles as well as the common people. The Puritan Emperor's administration had lost its ethos and a kind of immoral lawlessness prevailed in the higher grades of society. Under the very eyes ef the emperor in the capital the Prime Minister's son could molest womenas they went to the the river in the morning to have their bath. Loyalty and integrity were at a low ebb. There was no drill or dis cipline in the army and soldiers behaved like a rabble. A modern historian rightly observes:

> "In an army thus composed and thus commanded no milliary sprit was to be looked for, and both officers and men, were characterised by a complete absence of of the will to victory."[1]

What a harvest of misfortune for the possessors of the imperial purple ? The future was dark and it was clear that no body could prevent or avert the dissolution of the empire.

The Battle of Panipat (1761)

The news of the battles of Bararighat and Secunderabad was received at the Poona Court with dismy and the Peshwa was urged to prepare a large army under able commanders to fight against Abdali. The ablest chieftains and commanders like Balwant Rao, Trimbak, Sadashiva Rao Bhau, the Peshwa's cousin Shumsher Bahadur, Baja Rao I's son by his concubine Mastani and many others who had established their fame all over Maharahtra. The Bhau and and the Peshwa's son Viswas Rao lso went with a large equipage and thousands of followeɹs, elephants laden with silken tents, and the wives of officers and leading men shinining in cloth and gold. Ibrahim Garde was there with his artillery and had under his command 9000 men trained under the French general Bussy. The numbers of the huge army have been variously estimated. Accordinng to one estimate the Marathas numbered more than a lakh of men and Abdali's army consisted of 60,000 men of whom half were foreigners and half were non-combatants, According to Mr. Sardesai the Mar-

1. Cambridge History IV, p. 367.

atha army contained 45,000 Marathas and about 60,000 non-combatants, a miscellaneous horde of women, camp followers, servants and vegabonds. Surajmal Jat joined the army on the Chambal with his men. The big Maratha chiefs Sindhia, Holkar, Bhonsle and the Gaekwar all joined to help the national cause. Abdali's soldiers and allies the Wazir, Sujaudoulah, Bangash Nawab and Najibuddowlah looked upon this war as a crusade and their fanaticism was roused by the fact that the Brahmans were the leaders of the Maratha command. Panipat was an open plain stretching for miles together and there was no possibility of achieving success by the Gureilla method which was suitable for the hilly coutry in South India. The Marathas were not used to fight a pitched battle. A council of war was held to decide the method of fighting. Surajmal favoured thc Gourilla method which was the tradttional method of the Marathas. Holkar and Sindhia a'so "were of the same view but the Bhau rejected their advice as the chatter of goat herds and Zamindars". The Mararatha general felt slighted and thorougly disliked the Chitpavan pride and arrogance. They retorted by saying 'If this Brahman wins, he will collect the revenues of Hindustan and we shall have to wash his loin cloth. It is better that he should be defeated.' Surajmal decided to slip away from the battlefield:

Both sides waited for two and half months. The Marathas were tired. Their supplies ran short owing to the large army. Men and animals both died of hunger and want of fodder. Some of the Maratha allies were half-hearted and were not in a mood to fight. Surajmal Jat was not convicted of the necessity of his participation in the struggle. The population was hostile to the Marathas for they knew what sufferings had been caused by their plundering raids and exactions.

Abdali was superior to the Marathas in generalship. His men were full of energy and vigour and were keen to fight. He too was short of money but he was backed by men who who believed in his cause and wanted it to prosper. Starvation, famine and epidemic decmated the Marathas and damped their enthusiasm, while Abdali's men were determined and full of ardour. They had better equipment and the scarcity in their camp was not so acute as in the Maratha camp, they were full of buoyancy and high spirit whereas the Marathas were discontended and dejected. Defeat of the latter was certain. The great Napolean was right in saying, 'In war all is mental'.

The battle began at 9 a. m. and lasted till 2 p. m. 'Abdali's men led the attack in full fury and defeated the Marathas. Ibrahim Gardi's artillery proved of little avail and he was himself

among the slain. The greatest leaders were killed. Viswas Rao, the Peshwa's son, Sada Shiva Bhau, a valiant soldier were killed and his head was cut off and carried away by his slayers. Sadashiva Rao was a great soldier but his warlike qualities were marred by his pride and arrogance. Sir Jadunath Sarkar writes about him:—

> 'Thus perished Sadashiva Bhau on the grave of his reputation and of the imperialistie dreams of his race. The historian's memory goes forward to say 38 years later, when at the dark gateway af Seringapatam another heroic Indian Prince, after the wreck of his army and cause, came to his end in resisting an alien spoiler's hand on his person'.

Holkar and Gaekwar showed little willingness to fight; Sindhia was wounded and fled from the battle-field. Much inconvenience was caused by the presence of women in the camp. Bhau did not leave them at Mathura or Bharatpur or even at Delhi and this was pointed out to him by Surajmal Jat. The non-combatants, hungry and wornout, overcrowded the camp and exhausted the supplies. Thousands died of starvation.

Balaji Baji Rao the, peshwa, had hugged the illusion that Abdali would be easily expelled. But the fates willed otherwise. He started for the north and the terrible news of defeat came as he proceeded on his journey and at Bhilsa he was told about the contents of a merchant's intercepted letter. It contained the following words:—

> "The pearls dissolved, 25 gold mohurs have been lost and of silver and copper the total cannot be cast off."

The peshwa returned to Poona broken-hearted and exhausted. He was suffering from consumption; the shock aggravated the malacy and he died on 23rd June 1761 in the palace which he had built on the Parvati hill. The entire Maharashtra was plunged in gloom.

Sir Jadunath Sarkar's comment upon the disaster is well worth reading:—

> "Above all the disaster was due to the Peshwa's mistaken policy. If he were wise, he would have given up all his ambitions in Hindustan and confined himself to the South. But a strange Nemesis dogged his steps and his inordinate ambition to acquire mastery over Delhi and Agra proved his ruin."

Puppet Kings

Ahmad Shah; Alamgir II; Shah Alam II
(1748-54) (1754-59) (1759-1806)

Muhammad Shah was succeeded by his son Ahmed under the title of Ahmed Shah. He was a worthless, cowardly, perfidious young man of 21 who was utterly unfit for the kingly office. He conferred the title of Bahadur on the chief eunuch Javid Khan. The latter enjoyed the king's confidence and was very friendly with the Queen mother.

The leadership of the court party passed into the hands of these two persons and the result was complete mis-management and confusion. Javid Khan was hostile to Safdarganj, the wazir, against whom he plotted and wished to take his life. An attempt was made to replace the Wazir by Nasirjung; the second son of Nizamulmulk but it ended in a fiasco.

Safdar Jung, in order to safeguard his possessions against the Rohillas, instigated Qaim Khan to attack them but he was defeated and killed by Sadullah Khan, the elder son of Ali Muhamad Khan. Safdar Jung marched into the Bangash country exacted sixty lakhs of rupees and confined five brothers of Qaim Khan in the fort of Allahabad. The territorries were entrusted to Nawal Rai who was defeated by the Afghans as soon as the Wazir turned his back.

In 1750 Safdarjung called in Malhar Rao Halkar. Jayappa Sindhia and Surajmal Jat to help him against theBangash Afghans The Marathas came and drove the Afghans into the bills and occupied Ruhilkhand. They plundered the country and killed every man whom they could catch hold of. Their demand was conceded and half the Bangash domain in the Doab was ceded as the price of their help. This acquisition gave the Marathas a foothold in Hiudustan. Ahmad Khan Bangash harried the country of oudh in the province of Allahabad. He was routed by the Naga Sanyasis under the leadership of Rajendra Giri Gosain before the Allahabad fort, and Ahmad had to pay a heavy fine. He had to cede some of his territory to the Marathas who had come to help the Wazir.

Having heard of this disorder in the state of Delhi, Abdali again invaded Hindustan. This was his third invasion, the second having occurred in 1749. The Emperor called the Wazir to drive back the invader. He sought the help of the Marathas and entered into a treaty with Malhar Rao Holkar and Sindhia (April 1752) who promised to defend the empire. They were given territory in lieu of the fine imposed and were promised

Chauth from the Punjab and Sindh. The Peshwa was to be entrusted with the governorship of Ajmer and Agra and also the faujdari of Nagar and Mathura.

Abdali had defeated the Governor ofthe Punjab and compelled him to promise an annual tribute of fourteen thousand rupees. The tribute was not paid and Ahmad Shah Abdali came for the third time and besieged the governor. The latter could offer very feeble resistance and the invader compelled him to recognise him as his suzerain. When the Wazir came to Delhi with a large Maratha force, he was surprised to find that the Emperor had already ceded the Punjab and Multan to Abdali. Evasperated by this conduct, he asked Malhar Rao, whom he paid a few lakhs to help Ghaziuddin Khan, Governor of the six provinces in Deccan in settling his affairs. The Wazir was deeply annoyed at the conduct of Javid Khan who had become too powerful and done what he could to reduce the power of the Wazir to a nullity. The murder of the favourite eunuch (6th September 1752, brought about a breach between theEmperor and the Wazir and this led to a civil war which lasted for six months. Safdarjung's troops were seduced. He was denounced as a heretic, being a Shia, and thus a new colour was given to the civil strife. Suraj Mal, the Jat chieftain, was also called for help and it is said the Jats came and plundered the capital.

Ghaziuddin's son Imadulmulk himself brought the Marathas who stormed the emperors' camp. The Marathas who were laying siege to tne Jat fortress of Deeg abandoned it and marched to Delhi where, under the instigation of Imadul-mulk, they compelled the Emperor to dismiss Safdarjung (1753) and Intizamudowlah, son of Qamaruddin Khan, an uncle of Imadulmulk, was appointed Prime Minister.

On June 2, 1754 the new Wazir deposed Ahmad Shah and sent him to prison. Azzduddin, the second son of Jehandar Shah, was placed on the throne nnder the title of Alamgir II. The dethroned Emperor and his mother were blinded after a week.

Alamgir II (1754-59)

The new Emperor was 55 years of age. As he had spent all his life in prison, he had no experience of war or administration. By Safdarjung's faour he had obtained the title of Ghaziuddin Khan Bahadur Amir-ulumra the titles that were enjoyed by his father. He was a wellread man, knew several languages, was a caligraphist and a poet but notwithstanding these gifts he was utterly unfit to be a ruler in the troubled state of Delhi, being entirely unprincipled, dishonest and without a sense of gratitude and regard for his kinsmen.

Imadulmulk held the wizarat but he depended upon the support of the Marathas. Muinul-mulk, governor of the Punjab had died in 1753. Abdali had permitted his infant son to occupy the office and his wife Mughlani Begam to act as his regent. Soon after the child Emperor died and the Begam became the supreme authority in the province. She had neither ability nor experience and the condition of the Punjab grew from bad to worse. Ghaziuddin, who was betrothed to the daughter of Muin-ul-mulk asked for the hand of the Begam's daughter. His wish was granted but he was not satisfied. He wanted to seize the lady and obtain possession of the Punjab. He sent a force with his officers from Ludhiana to Lahore to bring the Begam as a prisoner. Eunuchs were commissioned to arrest the lady in the early hours of the morning and she was brought to Ludhiana. The government of the Punjab was conferred upon Adina Beg who was a traitor, utterly devoid of any noble feeling and largely responsible for these disgraceful transactions. But even he had to pay 30 lakhs to the Wazir for this office. Such was the condition of public life at Delhi.

Abdali was annoyed to hear all this and he embarked on his fourth invasion. Adina Beg fled in terror to the desert tract of Hisar and Hansi whither he thought no army would follow him. Imadulmulk begged his mother-in-law, Muglani Begam, to intercede for him. Abdali at first scolded him but later he pardoned him and reinstated him in his office. It was nothing short of a disgrace that the highest officice of the empire should be the gift of an Afghan adventurer from a foreign country.

Abdali entered the fort of Delhi on January 28, 1757 and met Alamgir II, the hapless monarch; and the same day order was given to plunder the city and squeeze money from the people. Terror spread throughout the capital. Many inhabitants took to flight and some put an end to their lives to escape from dishonour, Abdali stayed for nearly a month and it was during this period that the daughter of Prince Azzduddin, the emperor's elder brother (who was dead) was married to Timur Abdali's eldest son.

A force was sent with Ghaziuddin to punish Surajmal Jat for making alliance with Safdar Jung but the Jat chief tain's forts were so strong that they could not be taken. To ingratiate himself with the conqueror, the Wazir begged that some troops may be sent with him into the Doab to realise tribute from the chiefs and Jagirdars. Safdarjung had died and Shuaudowlah had succeeded to the masnad. The expedition was not a great success and he paid only 5 lakhs in cash through

the good offices of Sadulla Khan Ruhilla who had become friendly to Shuja. The Jat fortress of Ballabhagarh was taken and the garrison was put to the sword. Another force was despatched to Mathura where the defenceless pilgrims were massacred to exhibit the invader's zeal for the faith. Suraj Mal Jat was also going to be mulcted but he wasted time in negotiations and evaded the demand with dilatory pleas.

The hot winds of the Indian summer made a longer stay impossible. But before Abdali left, he married, out of compassion, a daughter and one of the two widows of Muhammad Shah who appealed to him to save them from the dishonour and disgrace at the hands of Najib. He carried the royal ladies with the booty worth several crores.

Abdali had left his son Timur Shah as governor of the Punjab but, soon after his departure, the Marathas established their predominance again at Delhi. Raghunath Rao bombarded the capital and compelled Najib to submit. The Punjab was in the hands of Najib as Mir Munshi who received full support from the Marathas Najib was besieged at Shakartal, a place 18 miles from Muzaffarnagar by Dattaji Sindhia. Najib appealed to the Muslim chiefs including Abdali for help, but as no relief was obtainable from these quarters, he submitted. The Marathas under Govind Pant marched into Ruhilkhand and drove away the Afghans. But the Maratha general suffered a defeat at Chandpur at the hands of Shujaudoulah.

Meanwhile the news came that Abdali was on his way to India to afford succour to Najib. Shuja returned to his country and went to the north to resist the invader. Such was the Maratha position in 1758. A large part of the country was under their sway which extendedfrom the far south to the Indus. They left Lahore in charge of Sabaji Sindhia and retired. It was a shortsighted policy to occupy the Punjab which was difficult to hold owing to hostile elements there, especially at a time when Abdali's invasion was imminent.

On the 29th November, 1759 the emperor Alamgir II was taken away from the palace on the pretext of visiting a hermit, was murdered by the Wazir and his corpse was thrown down the river bank below the Kutila of Firuzshah and a false story was circulated that he had died of an accidental fall from the wall of the fort. Intizam was also strangled to death. "The murder of Alamgir II was', as Sir Jadunath Sarkar rightly observes, an insane and absolutely profitless crime, because if I mad had spared that meekest of meek usurper's hoary head, it would not in any way have added to the number of his enemies.

As Prince Ali Gauhar (Shah Alam) the heir apparent had gone to Oudh to escape from the designs of the Wazir, another prince Muhi-ul-millat the grandson of Kambakhsha, was placed upon the throne under the title of Shahjehan II. The death of the miserable Alamgir brought no advantage to the murderers. There was widespread anarchy in the country and for the traitor Imad, Delhi 'ceased to be a refuge after this.

Prince Ali Gauhar heard in Behar the news of his father's death after nearly a month and he atonce proclaimed himself Emperor under thetitle of Shah Alam II (22nd December, (1759), the unfortunate manwho signed the Dewani of Bengal, Behar and Orissa to the East India Company and remained as an exile in the east for more than twelve years, leaving his ancestral throne vacant.

Abdali crossed the Indus in August 1759, entered the Punjab and Sabaji Sindhia was driven out of Lahore. Dattaji Sindhia was defeated and Slain in the battle of Bārānī-ghat. Jankoji, nephew, carriedon thestruggle but seeingno chance of his success, he fled to Rajputana where he hopedto join Malhar Rao Holkar. Before this could happen, Malhar Rao was routed by Abdali's general Jehan Khan at Secunderabad. Abdali called upon Suraj Mal, Jat, Chieftain of Bharratpur, and the Rajput Rajas to pay tribute and wait upon him but they temporised. He advanced towards Panipat where on 14th January, 1761 was fought the battle which decided the fate of the Marathas in Hindustan.

All these events were duly reported to Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao at Poona with a request that a powerful army and some conspicuous commanders should be sent to the north, otherwise it would be impossible to drive away Abdali and save the prestige and power of the Marathas in Hindustan. Little did these men know that the stars in their courses were fighting against them.

The battle of Panipat is one of the most decisive battles of Indian history. It shattered the power of the Marathas in Northen India and kept them away to the end of the reign of the new Peshwa Madho Rao (1761-72). The causes of this defeat can be clearly analysed. In military generalship and tactics Abdali and his men were superior to the Marathas who lacked foresight and capacity for organisation. The members of the confederacy had no unity of plan and action and were unwilling to accept advice from others. The men and horses of Abdali who had just arrived from the cooler regions were in a most efficient condition and were more than a match for the undisciplined rabble whicn the Marathas put into the field of battle. The Afghan cavalry was efficient and capable of rapid movement.

The Marathas had lost many of their horses owing to want of food and fodder and tuis had substantially diminished the strength of the army. Abdali's artillery was light, while the field guns of the Marathas were heavy and could not be swiftly carried from one place to another. Besides, the Afghans had ten thousand camels, carrying two soldiers with *Zamburaks* which made the finest artillery of that age in Asia. The equipment of Durrani officers was better than that of the Marathas. They were clad in armour which they used with great efficiency. The Maratha officers put on light garments and the rank and file had nothing but a loin-cloth, wrapped round their waist.

The Bhau's plan of battle was defective. He did not leave Panipat and could not move away with his fighting men. He had some capable officers but they were inferior to the Afghans. He did not receive wholehearted and eager co-operation from the members of the confederacy. None of the four great leaders had a capable or distinguished general who could inspire the men on the battle field with hope and confidencc. Jankoji was too young; so was the Peshwa's son who had no experience of warfare. There were several other commanders who like Antaji had little influence with the army to be obeyed promptly without hesitation. Malhar Holkar was old and incapable of riding on horseback and was thus incapacitated for active participation in a fearful battle.

It was a mistake to give up the guerilla tactics which they had employed in the past against the Mughals. A pitched battle was not advantageous to them. General Bhau waited for two and a half months and we do not know to this day why he made this delay. He ought to have engaged the Afghan army atonce. Delay caused a drain on the supplies and the hardship was felt by the entire camp. Besides, he made Delhi as his base which was quite useless. He took no steps to sufeguarded the retreat of his huge army in case of defeat and the result of this was that thousands were killed by the Afghans who followed them close upon their heels. Baffled and broken-hearted, they could find no place of shelter until they reached Surajmal's territory.

To allow a large number of women and non-combatants in the camp was a blunder and although it was pointed out by Suraj mal, his advice was rejected by the Bhau. Their presence caused much anxiety and inconvenience. Not only did they cause drain on the supply of food, they were sure to be turned into a helpless and confused crowd in the moment of defeat. These were the the miscalculations which marred the brilliant generalship of Sadashiva Rao Bhau. The French Captain Jean Law who visited Delhi in 1758 pointed out the chief causes of the disaster at Panipat. They were (a) the disorderly condition of the Indian troops (b) Abdali's better organisation (c) the flight of Holkar

and Sindhia (d) and the unsuitability of elephants as war-material against swiftly moving cavalry commanded by well-trained and disciplined officers.

Mr. Sardesai who has sympthy for the Marathas mentions the following causes of Marathas defeat:—

Bhau Sahib and Dattaji did not leave women and non-combatants behind at Bharatpur or Mathura or even at Delhi. Bhau should not have waited for more then two months. No specific reasons were given by him for this delay. The Maratha's strength was his 'horse'. The nobility and strength of his army was due to the horse, and in this contest we may remember the long marches of Maratha horsemen in the past in the plains of northen India which they harried and plundered for years and made visitations which destroyed the crops and impoverished the land. Mr. Sardesai thinks that the guerilla method was not likely to bring success in an open country. Panipat was a wide plain and the guerillas could not shield themselves against their relentless pursuers.[2] In Mr. Desai's opinion the battle decided nothing; nor did it shatter the power of the Marathas. They rose again and became formidable in India and challenged the British supremacy and their struggle continued till 1818 when they were finally vaniquished[1] at Kirkee and Korygaon.

The British historians have described the battle as a disaster. Mr. Elphinstone writes :

> "Never was a defeat more complete and never was there a calamity that diffused so much consternation. Grief and despondency spread over the whole Maratha people; most had to mourn relations, and all felt the destruction of the army as a death blow to their national greatness."

The Cambridge history of India supports this verdict :

> "Most disastrous of all, perhaps was the fact that it dealt a fatal blow to the one unifying influence in the Deccan, the prestige of the Peshwas. It is of course true that the Marathas, with chatactgristic resiliency, recovered from what would have been a crushing dis-

1. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas II, pp. 452-53.
2. It is difficult to accept in toto Mr. Dessai's account of the results of the battle. His view is that the disaster decided nothing (p. 454). He writes that it was like a natural visitation, destroying life, but leading to no decisive political consequences. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas. Vol. II (p. 454).

aster to a less hardy nation. In August 1763 they won a brilliant victory over the Nizam at Rākshasbhavan. The Arab and Hindustani mercenary, to an increasing degree, replaced the free Maratha of the Peshwa and paved the way to English interference in Maratha affairs. Panipat in other words, was the prelude to Assaye and Kirkee."[1]

The events that have been described before suggest one melancholy reflection. None of those who took part in fighting thought of India. None was inspired by a national feeling and none ever thought of the unity or freedom of the whole country. To the Marathas Maharashtra was India. They had become very powerful but they had done nothing to develop homogenity among the people. Similar was the outlook of the Rajputs. The Jat chief who came to fight at Panipat left the field without taking part in the battle.

In the middle ages patriotism was confined to a small locality or state. Men like Shiv aji, Maharana Pratap, Durga Das and Chatrasal had fought for their own interest. So was it in the eighteenth Century. The Rajputs, Jats, Bundelas and Marathas could not unite even against the effete Delhi monarchy.

National unity, national freedom and national patriotism were not understood in their modern connotations. Perhaps the age was not ripe for such ideas. Religion was a compelling motive but even this had lost its force. Even among the Marathas the feeling had died out after Shivaji. Their leaders overran the country and plundered the inhabitants. As Mr. Keene writes: 'the pax Marathica was based upon the principle, 'Take pay for not ruling'.

The leaders of the 18th century lacked foresight. Even from the *debacle* at Panipat they did not learn a lesson. In South India fight for supremacy was going on between the Indian powers in which the European trading companies were also taking part. A revolution had already taken place in Bengal which led to the overthrow of the Nawabi. The day of reckoning was not far off when all these were going to be swallowed up by a race coming from 5000 miles across the seas not merely to earn the profits of trade but to bring the whole country under their political sway.

1. Cambridge History of India, IV, p. 425-26.

CHAPTER II

The European Settlement in India

The Portuguese. India was known to the Western world from times immemorial. Her crafts and arts were famous in Europe and were carried to the shores of the Black Sea, to the Levant or to Egypt. As early as the 3rd century B. C. the Indian fabrics were much esteemed in Rome and Pliny complains of the drain of Roman wealth to the far off Indies. The recognised routes along which the trade passed were the Oxus, the Euphrates and the Red Sea. The fourth route round Africa was not yet known. When the Turks captured Constantinople, the situation was altered and the old routes passed into the hands of a hostile power, trade was seriously affected and the merchants of Venice and Genoa keenly felt tke need of a new route to the East. The honour of this discovery fell to the lot of Portugal.

It was Prince Henry the Navigator who opened a new World to his countrymen. He started a crusade against the Moors who were driven out of Portugal. He was fired with the passion of discovering new countries and sent out ships every year at his own cost to discover remoter parts, whereof he had both heard enquiry of captives taken at Cepta and conceived by his own study and reason that the Atlantic and Indian Seas had concourse, the one yeilding passage to the other, or rather being one continued ocean'. The Prince carried on his quest for twelve years in the teeth of great difficulties and discovered Jeruselem and some other places. His spirit lived after his death and his example was followed by his countrymen. In 1487 Bertholomew Diaz discovered the famous Cape to which King John gave the name of the 'Cape of Good Hope'.

The Dutch were the first to break the trade monopoly of the Portuguese. They were moved by commercial ambition no less than by religious hatred and by their determined opposition to the policy of Philip of Spain in Euiope. They first reched India in 1596 and their food supply depended upon maritime trade, they regarded eastern trade as a national concern and did every thing to promote it. The Dutch Company was a national organisation having at its disposal enormous resources and excessively the rights of soverignty over a large tract of land. Besides the

spirit of freedom and adventure which animated the Dutch Company helped them greatly in their Indian enterprise. In 1605 they captured Amboyna and gradually ousted the Portuguese from the spice islands. They laid seige to Goa in 1639 and captured Malacca two years later. In 1658 Ceylon came into their hands and by 1664 they had succeeded in capturing most of the Portuguese settlements on the Malabar Coast.

The Portuguese resisted also the English advance into India and there was an open conflict between the two nations. When the English entered into a treaty with the Shah of Persia in 1622 and captured Ormuz, the fear of Portugal was considerably minimised. By the Treaty of Madrid in 1630 the two countries had to give up hostilities in the East. The position was much improved by the commercial convention signed at Goa between the English and the Portuguese in 1634 which regulated commercial relations between them. Another treaty in 1661 secured Bombay for the English by the marriage of Charles II with Catherine of Braganza and friendly relations were established between the two countries.

The causes of Portuguese failure in India may be briefly summed up. They adopted the wrong policy of carrying on trade by Government officials who were never sincere and who cared more for their own profits and comforts. Ever since the Portuguese came to this they were hostile to the Muslims and showed their aggressive religious zeal in dealing with them. Their desire for conversion and marriage with Indian women degraded them, and created many enemies for them. The annexation of their kingdom to Spain in 1580 sertously affected their position and the discovery of Brazil diverted their energies to the west. Besides these causes there was the hostility of the Protestant powers in Europe. Holland and England were the bitterest foes of Spain in the sixteenth century and did everything in their power to destroy the Portuguese supremacy in India.

A serious mistake made by the Portuguese was their attempt at colonisation in a tropical country like India. This led to their moral and physical decline and the numerous half-castes who came into existence as the result of mixed marriages were utterly devoid of virtue or public spirit. This degeneracy proceeded apace in the seventeenth century. Parson Terry wrote in 1616 that the Portuguese of a mixed descent were a very low and poor spirited people. He is confirmed by Fryer who wrote in 1681 that they had fogotten their pristine virtue and lacked courage. Peitro della Valle who visited Goa in 1623 speaks of the poverty of the Portuguese and says that they lived wretched

lives. There is ample evidence to show that the Fortuguese were in a miserable condition and it was this that prepared the way for the Dutch and the English. A modern writer thus sums up the causes of Portuguese failure in India :

> "The primary cause of their fall was, of course, their failure to maintain their power on the sea. The union of the Spanish and Portuguese involved the latter nation in the defat of the Armada, and the fate of the Portuguese Empire in the East was decided by that encounter. Just as the fate of the French in India was decided by the battle of the Nile. But other causes were at work which made degeneration inevitable. There were no permanent elements in the great fabric erected by Da Gama and Albuquerque. The Portuguese came to India not as merchants or colonists, but as crusaders. This led them to commit acts of cruelty which made them detested by the inhabitants of the country. Da Gama's followers thought nothing of stuffing an Arab merchant's mouth with dirt and fastening it up with a slice of pork, or cutting off the ears of a Brahmin spy and sewing dog's ears to his head. The massacre, mutilation and torture of captives was the rule rather than the exception. The horrors of the Inqusition were afterwards added to the brutalities of forcible conversion, and were applied even to the Nestorian christians. Temples were plundered as a religious duty. The sacred tooth of the Buddha, revered by millions in Ceylon, Burma and Siam, was pounded in a mortar and hurled into the sea. Thus only adverse winds which saved Albuquerque from attempting a raid upon Medina with the object of holding up the body of the prophet to ransom in exchange for the Holy Sepulchure. It is difficult even to imagine the effect of such an enterprise upon the Muslim world. It is true that after 1570 the Portuguese secured the patronage of the Mughal Court......At Goa and throughout Portuguese India corruption and senility were widespread, for the portuguese, too proud to earn money honestly by trade, were driven to make by less honourable means."[1]

The Dutch. In the beginning the Dutch and the English were friends and their chief aim was to drive out the Portguese. But soon hostilities sprang up between the two on account of the waivering policy of the first two stuarts and the jealousies

1. Rawlinson, pp. 14-15.

caused by commerce. The Dutch forced the English Company to withdraw from the Spice Islands and thus deprived them of a most lucrative trade. This rivalry developed into a fierce struggle in the seventeenth century in the Indian water. The English defended Polu Run one of the Bnnda islands for four years (161-20) against the attacks of the Dutch. At last a treaty was arranged between the two countries by which mutual restitution was agreed upon. But it lasted only for twenty months and was little regarded by the Dutch in the Esat Indies where commercial warfare raged fiercely and the points of conflict multiplied with astonishing rapidity. Matters reached the climax when in 1623 came the news of the English at Amboyna by the Dutch. The cause of the tragedy was the suspicion of the Dutch Governor of Amboyna, Nan Speult that a conspiracy was formed by the English against Towerson along with others. There was no proof of the conspiracy but the Governor thought that a plot was contrived to capture the Fort. The protests of the victims that they were innocent were unheeded and they were put to death. The mansacre was the doing of a subordinate Dutch official but the calculated atrocity of the deed inflamed the wrath of the English and kindled animosities which later on led to war between the two countries.

The Stuarts did nothing to exact reparations from the Dutch but Comwell took up a strong attitude and tried to protect the interests of the English Company. The matter was referred to Commissioners by the Treaty of Westiminister in 1954 who restored Polu Run to the English and recommended a sum of £ 85000 as indemnity to the Company and a compensation allowance for the heirs of those who had lost their lives at Amboyna.

The numerous commitments of the Dutch on the continent of Europe brought about their failure. But the chief cause was the close connection of the Company with the Government. The Company was guided by the officers of the state who had enough of other business on their hands to keep them occupied. They had no time to look to the affairs of the Company and consequently its interests suffered by neglect.

Holland was engaged in long and unending wars with England and France, the effect of which was to seriously to weaken her position. When the peace of Ryswick was made (1697), Holland was in an exhausted state and her resources were materially reduced. In fact the French and the Dutch had disabled themselves by fighting against each other and prepared the way for the growth and development of the East India Company of the English. Henceforward the English Company began to draw

slowly but continuously to the foremost place in Asiatic conquest and commerce.

The Spice Islands remained in possession of the Dutch. Though the English continued to press their claims to Pulo Run and established a factory at Bantam, they never made any serious attempt to establish their influence in space the Malays Archepelego till the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Origin of the East India Company

We learn from the Anglo-saxon chronicle that the first Englishman to visit India was *Sighelm* in 883 A. D. He was sent to St. Thoma's shrine by King Alfred in persuance of, a vow that the latter had made when London was beseiged by the Danes. Nearly five centuries later Sir John Mandeville visited the Malabar Coast but it was not until the sixteenth century that any serious attempt was made to explore the East Indies. The discoveries made by Spain and Portugal fired the imagination of the English and as early as 1511 a petition was presented to Henry VIII which says :

> "The Indies āre discovered and vast treasures are brought from there everyday. Let us therefore lend our endea vours thitherwards; and ifthe Spaniards suffer us not to join unto them, there will be region enough for all to enjoy."

But the Pope's famous award stood in the way and England had to confine her efforts to the discovering of another route through the Arctic Ocean. The interest in India continued to grow and in the latter part of the sixteenth century she was visited by another Englishman Father Thomas Stevens who stayed in the country and sent valuable information to his relatives and friends about India. He learned the Maratha language, it is said, and felt a great admiration for it. He described it if thus :

> "Like a jewel among pebbles, like a sapphire among jewels, is the excellence of the Maratha tounge. Like the jasmine among blossoms, the musk among perfumes the peacock among birds, the Zodiac among stars, is Marathi among languages."

The interest aroused in England by Steven's letters resulted in an expedition to the Indies sent by the merchants of London. The leader of the party that was sent out was John Newbury, a good Arabic Scholar who had been to the East before and with him were associated Ralf Fitch a London merchant, William Leeds, a jeweller, and James Story, a painter. They were well

received at Goa though they had feard a bad treatment. They carried a letter for the Mughal Emperor Akbar from Elizabeth, asking for generous treatment of her subjects. They journeyed to Agra amidst great difficulties and from there went to Fatehpur Sikri and were very much struck by the commercial possibilities of the country. They stayed at Sikri till September 1585. William Leeds entered the service of the Great Mughal while Newbury and Fitch left the country. Fitch reached England in April 1591. This was the first regular expedition to India fitted out by London merchants and the information supplied by the pioneers of the Indian expedition prepared the way for the foundation of the East India Company.

Foundation of the East India Company.

It will be remembered that in the middle of the sixteenth century the Cathlic reaction was in full swing in Europe. England as a Protestant country had to bear the brunt of the opposition of Spain which was at this time the acknowledged champion of the Counter-Reformation. Philip II of Spain had great designs upon England. He fitted out the Armada to destroy England but it was defeated in 1588 and the country came out of this war victorious and powerful. The English merchants whose curiosity had been excited by the accounts of the East Indies felt a strong desire to renew their attempts to go to India by the Cape route. In 1590 John Davis set out on an expedition but he could get no further than Medeira. A year latter Captain Lancaster after an adventurous career in the Arabian Seat urned homewards but being without charts and maps he lost his way and reached Trinidad. Some of the party were destroyed here and the others were rescued by a French vessel and reached home in 1594. In 1596 another fleet was sent on by Sir Robert Dudley with a letter from Elizabeth to the Emperor of China but it was never heard of again It was probably destroyed by the Portuguese.

The death of Philip II in 1598 made peace possible between England and Spain and facilitated matters. In 1599 some London merchants presented a petition to the Privy Council asking for permission to trade with the East Indies especially with such kingdoms and dominions as were not subject to the King of spain and Portugal. The Privy Council gave careful attent ion to this matter and it was not until December 31, 1600 that a Charter was granted by Queen Elizabeth for the discovery of the trade for the East Indies. Efforts were mdde to subscribe capital and £68,323 were collected and a fleet of four ships was fitted ont with Captain James Lancaster as the leader of toe

cxpedition. The Company was formed and was incorporated by the name of 'the Governor and Company of merchants of London trading into the East Indies.'

Career of the Company

The foundation of the East India Company is a landmark in the history of the British Empire. None of these early adventurers could have foreseen that one day the step which they were taking was to place in the possession of their countymen a wonderful Empire in the Orient. The task which they had set to themselves was indeed full of risks but they persevered in their attempts. The position of the English Company was better than that of the other companies. The Portuguese and the Dutch Companies were backed by their respective Governments whereas theEnglish Companyowed its origin to private initiative and dependedfor its preper guidance upon the energy and vigour of the mercantile classes. James Lancaster reached Achin in Sumatra and establised a factory at Bantam. But the real objective was the Indian mainland and a second expedition was sent under John Mildenhall with a letter for Akber. He went by the overland route through Persia and reached Lahore in 1603. He was much hampered by the Portuguese in securing trade facilities for his country and they employed every kind of artifice to thwart his mission. But Mildenhall did not give way to despair and learning Persian in a short time he began to coverse with the Emperor without an interpreter. Ak bar passed orders that the privileges asked for should be granted but we do not find that a firman was actually granted. His employers were displeased and it appears that they terminated his services. He went to Agra where he died in 1601.

The Company planned a fresh voyage. This was more succes-ful. It was led by Willium Hawkins who reached Surat in 1608 and was well received by the authorities. He went to Jehangir's Court at Agra and became a favourite. By drinking hard and telling the stories of his travels, he won the favour of the King who provided him with an Armenian wife to cook his food, and offered him a pension of £ 3,200 a year and a mansab if he stayed in India, and gave him the title of 'Inglish Khan'. But soon Hawkins fell out of favour owing to the intrigues of the nobles and the Portuguese. The viceroy of Goa told the Emperor that he would soon lose his harbours and his trade if he allowed a foot-hold to the English in the country. He stayed in India till 1612 when he left for home in an English ship. Hawkins' mission failed as he did not succeed in getting any kind of firman. But as a modern writer says he had thoroughly explored the resources of the Mughal Empire of which he wrote

a very able account and had investigated the possibilities of Surat as a site of a factory.[1]

In 1609 Sir Henry Middleton had started for the Indies at the head of an expedition and was asked to go to Surat to make effort to establish a factory and obtain the privilige of free trade. He also failed in his mission and on his way to Bentam his ship was destroyed in the Javanese. Middleton lost heart and it is said died "most of heartsore".

The year 1612 in which Hawkins left for England marks an important stage in the career of the English Company. He was followed by another Englishman, Captain Thomas Best, who on reaching India, was very much hampered in his progress by the Portuguese. They boasted that they would force the English sailors to yield in an hour. Best prepared to meet them and defeated them off Swally in a naval engagement. He lost three sailors in action, while the Portuguese casualties were very heavy indeed. Although Best won a victory, he saw the difficulties which the Company was certain to meet at the hands of the Portuguese. He felt inclined to abandon Surat altogether but he was dissuaded from doing so by Thomas Aldworth who was left incharge of the factory along with a few others. Aldworth went to Agra but because of Jerome Xavier he could not make much headway at Court. He went back to Surat and maintained the factory in spite of the heavy odds against him and declared Surat to be 'the only key to open all the rich and best trade of the Indies'. Soon agencies were established at Ahmadabad, Burhanpur, Ajmer and Agra.

The Company's affairs didnotgowell forsometime at the Mughal Court. Thoroughly disgusted with them, Jehangir had turned to the Portuguese, and the English factors were illltreated by the Mughal officers. There was a talk of making over Surat to Prince Khurramwho wasnot well disposed towards the English.A treaty was actually being negotiated with the Portuguese at Goa with a view to expelling the English from Surat and to driving themcompletely outof thecountry. The hostilityof the Dutch who threatened them with expulsion from the Malay Archepelego added to their difficulties. In this awkward situation they pressed upon the Home Government the need for sending a suitable ambassador to the Court of Agra. James I agreed atonce and Thomas Roe was sent as the official agent ef the British Nation to makea permanant treaty with theMughal Emperor and to seek his permission to open factories on the coast and other places on the Indian mainland. How careful the Company was at this time is evidenced by the agreement into which she entered with her own representative. He was his Majesty's ambassador to the Great

Mughal for securing better trade facilities in his dominions. He was asked not to engage in trade on his own account directly or indirectly and was to inform the Company if any of her servants broke the rule. He was not allowed to interfere in the work of the local factories and to ask for an advance of more than 100. The Company agreed to give him £ 600 per annum, half of which was to be invested in her stock and the rest was intended to defray his expenses. He was given full power to treat with the Mughal Emperor and in the event of failure he was to explore the Red Sea or any other place suitable for any commerce. Experience suggested caution and Sir Thomas Roe was warned not to fight with Spain or any other nation that was at peace with the English. He was privately instructed by asking 'to be careful of the preservation of our honour and dignity' and to do his best to further the Company's interests in a manner consistent with the instructions given to him. He was further asked to remove the bad impression which the Portuguese had created in the Indian mind about the English and to acquaint the people with 'our power and strength at sea, which giveth Us not only reputation and authority among the greatest princes of Christendom, but maketh Us even a terror to all other nations.'

With these instructions Roe sailed in February 1615 and landed at Swally Hole towards the close of September but he was not well received by the Mughal officer Zulfiqar Khan who wanted to search him and his guards. Roe refused to submit to this insulting treatment and atonce proceeded to Agra to acquaint the Emperor in person with the state of affairs. He met Jehangir at Ajmer, travelled with him to Mandu and Ahmadabad and remained three years at Court, endeavouring to secure favourable terms for his country. At the Imperial Court was a party headed by Prince Khurram who favoured the Portuguese and wished to drive the English away from Surat. Roe drafted a treaty to which the Prince whose Portuguese sympathies were well known objected and asked Jehangir why he favoured the English whose presents were mean and poor. The Emperor did not sign the treaty and authorised the Prince to grant a firman for permitting the English to trade in peace at Surat. The Great Mughal could not treat the king of England as his equal and all that could be obtained was a few concessions and firmans. In the letters that Roe wrote to the Company at home, he indicated the policy which they were to follow. He regarded Surat as a suitable port but was not in favour of building a fort there or keeping a militia. 'A war and traffic are incompatible' he wrote, and the Dutch and the Portuguese had ruined themselves by following this policy. He suggested that the Company should restrict itself to trade and entirely give up the idea of fighting

with any nation. In his view a forward policy at sea was fraught with great advantages and a blockade of Goa was likaly to be very efficacious in crippling the power of the Portuguese.

Roe continued his efforts to get as much as he could. Through the good offices of Asaf Khan, Nurjehan's brother to whom the English Ambassador sold a famous pearl, he obtained from the Emperor a firman far more favourable than the one received previously. By this free trade was allowed and the factories were to live under their laws and religion, and the government of Surat was ordered to protect the lives and goods of the English merchants.

Roe's embassy marks a definite stage in the development of the East India Company. Henceforward they were treated well and trade interests were carefully guarded. The most important part of his work was the suggestion of the policy regarding the internal affairs which was carefully followed for several years, a policy was to be unaggressive and wholly mercantile. Roe rendered indeed valuable services to the Company, and he could justly claim 'my sincerity toward you in actions is without spot; my neglect of private gains is without example, and my frugality beyond your expectation.' (1).

Roe left for England early in 1619 leaving the English factory in the hands of Kerridge, who now become the President. The Portuguese had not yet withdrawn from the field; they fought a battle with the English in 1630 and steadily lost their ground under the pressure of Dutch attacks. Surat now became the Company's chief settlement and by 1643 the English established themselves on the east coast at Masulipatam and obtained from the local Hindu chief to build a factory which was called St George, 230 miles south of Masulipatam. Round this factory gradually grew up the town of Madras where also came to dwell Indian merchants and artisans. Up the Hoogly also a settlement was established for purposes of trade with Bengal. At the Mughal Court the Company's position improvad through the efforts of Dr. Boughton, a surgeon in the East India Company's service, who treated the Emperor and was appointed the royal physician. They were now trading from the Persian Gulf to the borders of China and as the commercial operations of the Dutch and the English covered the same field, the two often came into a conflict with each other. The advantage in this struggle lay with the Dutch for the English Company's position was adversely affected by the war between the king and the Parliament. They suffered much at the hands of the Dutch at this time and in the old records

1. Embassy p. 345.

we read of the 'intolerable injuries; cruelty, insolvency and cunning, circumventing projects of the Dutch in the East Indies. The Dutch Company received much help from the Home government and fully prepared itself to drive all foreign rivals from the field.

As has been said before; the English Company's trade was much hampered by the attitude of the government at home. Charles I acting arbitrarily granted leave of trade to certain favourites, thus creating a competition which did much harm to the Company's interests A protest was made but in vain. In 1657 Cromwell wished to break the monopoly of the Company's trade but when they expressed their intention to retire from the Indian field the Government paid attention to their grievences. A charter was granted in 1657 by which the constitution of the Company was recognised and it passed from its mediaeval to its modern basis." Peace was also made with the Dutch who agreed to compensate the English for the massacre of Amboyna and to accept the English position on the Indian Coast.

With the restoration in 1660 the fortunes of the Company began to improve. Charles II granted them a new charter in 1661 giving them right to coin money build fortifications; administer justice, punish interlopers and make peace and war with non-christian states. When the king married the Portuguese Princess Catherine of Braganza, she brought with her as dowery the town of Bombay which afterwards grew into the capital of the Western possessionsof the Company. Its harbour proved extremely useful and Bombay developed into a flourshing centre of trade and became the chief settlement on the western coast.

The position of England in Europe in the last quarter of the seventeenth century greatly helped the progress of the East India Company. Spain and Portugal had gone the the background. England, France and Holland entered the lists for commercial supramacy but in the long war that followed the French and the Dutch established their strength and prepared the way for the rapid advancement of the English who, as Alfred Lyall says, began to draw slowly but to the foremost place in Asiatic conquest and commerce.

The Company's position may be summed up as follows. The value from the imports from Bengal rose and the Company made enormous profits. In 1685 Bombay became their chief seat of power and in 1687 the chief Bengal agency was removed from Hoogly to Calcutta. Madras had become the chief seat of the East Coast. The Company was liberally helped by Charles II and James II who granted charters which greatly strenthened its position. This encouraged the Company to assume the role

renources which 'may be the foundation of a large, well guarded English dominion in India for all time to come'. This policy is usually associated with Sir Josia and Sir John Child who have been erroneously described as brothers in many histories.

The pious Aurangzeb was perturbed by these developments and at last agreed to make peace in 1690. He imposed his own terms on the traders when he had brought them to their knees and punished effectively for their overbearing conduct. He agreed to renew the leave for trade on the condition of the payment of fine of £ 17000 provided that the Company promised to behave themselves for the future no more in such a shameful manner and Child who had suggested this policy should be dismissed from the Company's service and expelled from India. Sir John Child was saved from this disgrace by his timely death a little earlier.

The English suffered a lot of humiliation but there was one great advantage which they gained. Job Charnock had attempted twice to establish a settlement 'on the site of Calcutta but each time he had failed. Now in 1690 he succeeded and gradually a large town grew on the site selected by him. It was a valuable site besides commanding a navigable area of 600 miles.

The Company had 'the power to bottle up French and Dutch Commerce in Bengal, as well as the Moghul out-let from the northen India to the sea'. It enabled the English to defend themselves against Maratha aggression, Charnock died in 1693 and was buried in the city the site of which was chosen by him. Three years after the company obtained from the Mughal viceroy permission to fortify the settlement and in 1730 Fort William became the seat of the Presidency of Bengal a separate Presidency. Called the Presidency of Fort William after the reinging Emperor restored the privileges of the Company. Auranzeb died in 1707 and was succeeded by Emperor Bahadur Shah who allowed the Company to enjoy the Privilges which had been granted by his predecesses. Efforts were made to consolidate the position of the Company and it looked forward to an era of progress and prosperity.

The Company had now acquired the status of a Zamindar in the Mughal Empire by purchasing three villages in the vicinity of Fort William, one of which was Kolikatta from which Calcutta derives its name. The Company paid revenue to the Empire and the latter recognised its position. In 1715 the Company sent an Embassfy to the Great Mughal for the redress of their grievances. One of them was Mr. Hamilton, a surgeon, who soon won the good will of the Emperor by curing him of the dangerous disease he was suffering from. The Mughal Court was

a scene of corruption, profligacy and incompetence and the Embassy a realised that any privilege which the Company could obtain will have to be maintained by its own strength for the Mughal Emperer[1] had lost all power to enforce his decres. The results of the Embassy's efforts were important. The Company got permission to purchase thirty-seven more villages in the neighbourhood and this added to her strength as a territorial power. She obtained a firm foothold in Bengal and could not be easily ousted from the place she had occupied.

The New Company created by the Commons

The huge profits made by the East India Company created jealousy in England and many people began to question the monopoly enjoyed by the East Indian merchants. The interlopers were most emphatic in declaring that the Company's privileges were unlawful and its monopoly illegal. Some argued that the Company went to war unnecessarily with the Mughals which resulted in the loss of prestige and objected to foreign trade which involved the country in tremendous responsibilities and led to the export of bullion. Another group offered opposition to the joint stock theory and found fault with the exclusive charter of the Company and urged its dissolution. They criticised Sir Josia Child's dictatorship in the affairs of the Company and pointed to its unwholesome influence as the ground for drastic action. Such was the opposition offered to the policy and methods of the Company. But Sir Josia Child, who happened to be the chairman of the Board of Directors was a masterful personality; he succeeded by bribing and like means in enlisting the favour of the Court and the Company's opponents were prevented from doing anything to injure its interests After the revolution of 1688 the days of the Court were over and the Company had to deal with the Parliament, A new Company was formed in 1698 when Montague, Chancellor of the Exchequer, in sore need for money, passed an Act granting a royal charter to the company, who promised to lend a large sum to the government. As soon as the new Company entered the field, abitter struggle ensued between the two organsations. Each wanted to ruin the other; each had to win the favour of the Mughal; each gave out that it alone enjoyed the favour of the Government at home. This unedifying

1. The Embassy addressed the Mughal Emperor as 'absolute Monarch and prop of the Universe' to which the Governor of Fort Willum replid in his own words, but' as to smallest particle of sand 'unto his forehead, at command, rubbed on the ground'. In reality the Emperor was a mere roifaineant, a tool in the hands of his ministers.

quarrel was taken advantage of by provincial governors in India who frequently made gain for themselves by taking bribes impartially from both. Trade was completely disorganised by this rivalry and ultimately when the futility of running two companies became clear to Parliament, an Act was passed in 1702 through Godolphin's efforts amalgamating the two companies. Still the work of the United Company was hampered by the jealousy of its servants in India. The New Company sent Sir William Norris to the Moghul Court but the Emperor who was much distracted by the pratical activities of the English, refused to grant a firman or privileges. It was not until 1708 that all these differences were settled, by Godolphin's award and an act of Parliament was passed by which the old Company was finally and completely amalgamated with the New Company under the name of the United East India Company. It was a momentous decision. It brought about the flow of immense capital, enterprise and energy into the hands of a single body which could look forward to a course of great growth and expansion. The Company's resources were considerably increased and henceforward it began to acquire territorial possession. Sir Willium Hunter rightly observes :

> "Hence forward there was to be no retrograde step. Though they knew it not, and though the goal was far distant the English in India had definitely entered upon the course, which in its latter end, was to merge into the overlordship of the peoples of Hindustan from Cape Commorin to the Himalayas."[1]

It was this Company officially called, the 'United Company of Merchants of England trading to the East Indies' which administered the affairs of India, applied for the renewal of its charter from time to time, down to the Mutiny, and gradually became a sovereign power and supplanted the Mughal Empire. It was a most wonderful achievement for a trading company to have brought a large continent under its sway by giving a short shrift to one Indian potentate after another. The disunion of the Indians had led to this result. In 1858 it was found that the Company had become an anachronism and its privileges and powers were transferred to the Crown.

Growth of settlements

The rapid decline of the Mughal Empire and the cessation of its political authority in the provinces led the Company to increase its mighty strength. It was now a large corporation

1. History of British India I pp. 383-84.

with plenty of temporal influence and was well supported in England. But she was soon confronted with a new rival in the Ostend Company started by the Austrian emperor in 1717. This Company received a charter in December 1722 though it was not made public till August 1723. Its capital was quickly subscribed and the value of the shares went up by 12 or 15 per cent. But soon strong opposiiion was offered by the European powers the English, French and the Dutch who entered into a treaty and denounced the Ostend Company, It was a powerful coalition against the Ostend Company and its continuance became a question of European politics about which nations felt most strongly. The emperor was asked to wind up the Company and anxious as he was to secure the assent of the powers to the pragmatic sanction by which he wanted to pass the Austrian possesions to his daughter Maria Theresa, he suspended the privileges of the company for seven years and entered into a treaty with Great Britain in March 1731 by which he agreed to suppress the company altogether. The company had established two settlements one at parki Balar on the Hugli and the other at Corelong near Madras. The English merchants in Bengal determined to destroy the settlement on the Hugli and in 1733 the Presidency incited the Nawab of Bengal to invade the factory. The garrison offered a stubborn resistance but it was overpowered. The other settlement lingered a few years and it was not till 1793 that an end was put to the legal existence of the company.

The three Presidencies. The break-down of Imperial authority created a serious situation in the city and English settlements were seriously affected. Bengal continued peaceful and prosperous under its Nawabs Murshid Quli Khant, Shujat Khan and Alivardi Khan. Alivardi Khan (1741-50 was a capable man who, although he knew the danger, treated the English well and kept on friendly terms with them. The commerce of Bengal thrived and round the factory grew up the city of Calcutta the population of which in 1735 was estimated at 1,00,000.

In Bombay the English were in a difficult position. Nowhere the effects of the weakening of the Mughal empire felt more than in this part of the country. The power of the house of Shivaji had passed into the hands of the Brahman Peshwas who established themselves as a dynasty with large designs and ambitions. The Maratha pirate Kasshoji Angria raided the seas and Mughal shipping at first but later started his predatory activities to the English ships also. Angria died in 1729 and his sons followed his example. Bombay continued to suffer at the hands of these corsairs and tried to meet the danger boldly by allying itself with Sidi, the Moghul admiral, against the

Marathas and matters did not improve until a treaty was made with the Peshwa in 1739.

Aurangzeb, long campaigns in the Deccan had caused disorder andanarchy. The extinction of the kingdoms of Golkunda and Bijapur and the exhaustion of the Imperial resources ln war against the Marathas together with the constant discontent in the army and the dislocation of finance aggravated the form of disorderd and when Aurangzeb died in 1707. the Moghul authority ceased to exist in Sonthern India. Asafjah Nizamul Mulk became Subadar of the Deccan and a scramble ensued between the Marathas and the Nizam-Both had great ambitions. The English kept their friendly relations with the Nizam by sending presents regularly to the court at Haiderabad and succeeded in keeping themselxes out of these wars. A new power was established in the Carnatic the tract of land bounded by the Krishna on the north and by Tanjore on the South. The Nawab of the Carnatic paid homage to Nizamul Mulk as the representative of the Mughal emperor. Madras developed peacfully while the native powers fought amongst themselves and possessed the Coromandal coast besides Madras, Fort St. David, Caddalore and the factories at Vizgapatam and Masulipatam. They kept on friendly terms with the Ruler of the Carnatic and the Nizam of Haiderabad but about the year 1740 when the Marathas invaded thc Carnatic and slew the Nawab, Dost Ali, the situation became serious.

Dost Ali was succeeded by his son Safdar Ali who was hostile to Chanda Sahib a son-in-law of Dost Ali, who had established his power at Trichnopoly with the help of the Marathas The Nawab attacked Chanda Saheb and compelled him to surrender after feeble resistence. Chanda Saheb became a prisoner of the Marathas and remained in their custody till 1741. Chanda Saheb was a great friend of the French and his discomfiture and humiliation was a great loss to them.

Safdar Ali was assasinated soon afterwards and a son. who was a mere strripling. was placed upon the throne. He too was murdered shortly afterwards and thc Nizam appointed his own nominee Anwaruddin as the Nawab of the Carnatic in 1744. Such was the condit.on of the Carnatic when the Anglo-French war broke out in the Deccan.

Administration of the Company. In their administration the Company followed the example of the Dutch. Each of the three presidencies had a council with one President and twelve members. Questions of importance were discussed in the weekly meetings and records were kept in minute books, which were

sent to the court of Directors to enable them to keep watch over the company's affairs. There were five grades of service (1) apprentices (2) Writers (3) Factor (4) Junior Merchant (5) Senior Merchant. The salaries were small and the servants of the company used to eke out their income by engaging in private trade, which yielded good profits. The salary of a writer in 1674 was £10/- a year. The company did business with the help of the banias and entered into contracts with the artisans and weavers. As large sums of money accumulated in the hands of the company, it was found necessary to employ guards but they were not allowed to build forts and it was the fortification of these settlements that brought the traders into conflict with the Indian powers.

Life in an English Factory in the 17th Century.

Very interesting accounts are given of the life lived in the factory in the 17th century by Europoans themselves and others. Della Valle, Herbert and Mandels are some of the travellers who have given us a picture of factory life but fuller and better accounts are those of Frayer and Brighton who came to Surat in 1673 and 1689 respectively.

The factory was housed in a large solid two storied building with a number of rooms. Some of the rooms on the ground floor were used as godowns and store rooms. There was much hurly burly in the factory andthe banias, brokers, merchants and the ware-house-keepers all madea 'mereBilling gate' The brokers plied a good trade and often took advantage of the ignorance of the English factors of the Indian languages. The upper storey was used for residential purposes. The President was allotted a set of rooms. The factory had a large open dining hall and an oratory or chapel decently embellished so as to render it both neat and solemn, without the figure of any living creature in it, for avoiding all occasion of offence to the Moors, who were well pleased with the innocence of this worship.

The president's office was one of considerable importance. He was usually sent from England and received a salary of £500/- per annum. He lived in a style befitting his high position. The Counsellors and factors drew £300/- to £100/- per annum. The surgeon and the chaplain received a salary of £ 50 and £ 100/- per annum respectively. They were all provided with free board and lodging and allowed to engage in trade on their account which brought them considerable profits. Fryer gives interesting details about the trade which was carried on at Surat. The English merchant depended largely upon his broker who conducted his trade.

The life in the factory was very much like that lived in a monastery or college or a house of some religious order. There were all kinds of rules and regulations to guide the couduct of the company. Moral laxity was not permitted and Ovington refers to a resolution of the company which forbabe all profane swearing and taking the name, of God in vainly cursed oaths and all kinds of drunkenness, intemperance, fornication and uncleanliness. A library was provided which contained' all manner of improving books'. To safeguard the health of officers of the company tea was recommended. Ovington writes that 'the tea pot' is seldom of the fire. The fasts and feast of the church were strictly observed and the holidays were celebrated by expedition into the country. A display of much pomp and splendour accompanied these excursions and the President and his men tried their best to impress the Indians by their dignity and grandeur. Even the last rites were performed with great dignity and we are told of magnificent structures and stately monuments in the European cemetry at Surat. Some of these imitated the stateliness of Mughal mausoleums. The Indians witnessed the burying of the dead with great interest and when Sir George Oxenden died the streets. balconies and tops of houses were so full as they could stand one by another. Such was life lived in the Surat factory and it was by these humble men who drank and swore and did busines in their quiet fashion, were laid the foundations of the British Indian Empire.[1]

"Surat is now a shadow of its former glory.A busy native population still throngs the bazars and the narrow streets with their carved wooden balconies. But the Tapti has silted up and only small vessels can ascend the river, the maritime trade has passed to Bombay, and swelty road is deserted, save for occasional country craft. The Goopi Talao where the President used to take the air in solemn state has long since been drained. The mouldering castle walls frown silently upon the placid stream which was once the scene of so many gallant contests, and the pretention tombs, in the deserted graveyard are almost the only relics of the departed greatness of the place."

The general tenour of the life of the Company's servants continued to be the same in the 18th century also. Drinking and gambling were common. Private trade was allowed. Slave labour was employed and the director's admonitions were often disregarded.

The Directors tried to exercise a vigilant control over their agents in India. That they were not altogether unconcerned

1. Beginnings of Western India in 134-35.

about the acquisition of territorial sovereignty is clear from their despatches. There is evidence to show that they never lost sight of their desire to found a well grounded sure English dominion in India for all time to come. They asked their officers to be impartial and just in their dealings with the people of India. They asked them to keep in mind the following principles in administering justice.

> "Never do an act of arbitray power to hurt anybody. Let your determinations be always just, not rigorous but inclining to the merciful side. Always try the cause never the party. Do not let passion overcolud your reason."

Needless to say, these fine maxims were more honoured in the breach than in the observance.



CHAPTER III

Anglo French Wars
(1740-1763)

The French Settlements. The British supremacy was not established without a hard contest with the French. It is necessary therefore to trace briefly the history of the French commercial enterprise and the ruin of their political ambitions. The first French company was formed in 1611 to colonise Madagascar, the object being the extension of the dominion of France but it did not achieve much success. Other efforts failed for want of financial support. In 1642 just before his death, Cardinal Richelieu, the masterful minister who worked for French greatness at home and abroad, founded the society de L' Orient with exclusive privileges to trade with the East. But even this did not do much. A serious attempt was made in 1664 by Colbert, Chief Minister under Louis XIV.

In 1668 a French factory was established at Surat and in 1669 another at Masulipatam. A few years later in 1674 the French agent Francis Martin acquired the village of Pondichery eighty-five miles South of Madras which afterwards grew into a large city with 70,000 inhabitants and became the capital of all the French possessions in India. In Bengal Chandranagar was first occupied about 1673 and a factory was built there in 1690-29 on the Hugli on a piece of land granted by the Nawab. The war between Holland and France in Europe reacted adversely on the fortunes of the East India Company. The French occupied St. Thome but next year the Dutch drove them out of Trincomali and in 1674 captured St. Thome. Pondichery was captured after a short siege in 1693 and was not restored until after the Treaty of Ryswick. The French prestige declined and the factories at Surat, Bantam and Masulipatam were deserted.

The company remained in this condition for nearly twelve or thirteen years. A fresh impetus was given to its activities when John Law, the famous Scottish financier, started his schemes in France. The company was absorbed into the larger undertaking and when Law's system came down with a crash, the Company survived and was reconstituted as the "Perpetual Company of the Indies" and was allowed to enjoy the monopoly of the tobacco trade. The position of the Company improved; its dividend increased and a number of places came into

its possession. In 1725 Mahe on the Malabar coast was acquired and in 1739 Karikal on the Coromandel Coast. When Dupleix who was a man of great ability, energy and ambition succeeded Dumas in 1741 as Governor of Pondichery with complete civil and military authority the history ot the French East India Company entered on a new epoch.

Position of the two Companies. It was inevitable that the two companies should come into conflict with each other. But before describing the actual struggle between them it will be well to examine their relative positions. The character of the people and the constitution of the Governments of mother countries were reflected in the orgnization and working of the two companies. They worked on different principles and their agents were inspired by different motives. The contrast between their positions has been described with admirable clarity and precision by Sir Alfred Lyall (1)

> "In France the East India Company were closely connected with the Government; they formed monopolies, received treasure grants and subsidies, dealt largely in loans and lotteries, and being usually deep in the State's debt, were consequently at the mercy of the Crown. From the year 1723 their Directors had been appointed by the King, whose officers exercised such constant control over the management that as the Company declared afterwards, the interference of the Government was the cause of all their misfortunes. From 1744 they were constantly borrowing large sums on the security of their privileges or revenue farms; it was from such revenues as these that their dividends were paid, and their stock artificially maintained. The English Company, on the other hand, so far from being in debt to their Government, had the public treasury with large loans and contributions which amounted in 1750 to £4,200,000. They were an independent and powerful corporation, trusting not to the official favour but the parliamentary influence in transacting business with the Crown; and as they were left to manage their own affairs, the greater responsbility thrown upon their chiefs produced in the long run a body of sound and experienced administrators, guided by long tradition well-versed in foreign trade, and backed by the overflowing capital of a great mercantile community."

It is clear then that the French Company depended largely upon official help and its Directors and Inspectors were

1. The Rise of British Dominion in India, pp. 76-77.

nominated by the Crown. For some time the system worked well but afterwards the benumbing influence of Government crushed all initiative and enterprise and the real interests of the company ceased to thrive. Pondichery had made much progress under Francis Martin later under Lenior and Dumas. But Chandranagar was in a neglected state until Dupleix arrival he did much to further the Company's interest and a study of records reveals the fact that during the peaceful ministry of Cardinal Fleury the Company's prosperity increased considerably and the Indian trade yielded substantial profits. The English Company was, however, in a more advantageous position and though some writers have said that at the beginning of the war the means and resources of the two were equal, it cannot be said that in several respects the English Company was superior to the French.

The Scene of Conflict. The scene of conflict between the two Companies was to be the Carnatic which was a part of Asaf Jah's kingdom in the Deccan. The Nizam was an imperial officer who had after Nadir Shah's invasion of Hindustan consolidated his possessions in the Deccan including the Carnatic* which continued to exist as a subordinate rulership. The disorders consequent upon a disputed succession after Sadat Ullah's death were put down by the Nizam but they led to the weakening of the local authority in the country round the English and French settlements. It was here that the two nations entered upon a struggle for power which ultimately resulted in the expulsion of one of the combatants from the field.

In the middle of the 18th Century there were three tracts of the Karnatik, 1. the east coast territory between the mouths of the Krishna and the Kaveri in which Arcot was situated 2. the east coast territory south of the Kaveri in which Trichinopoly was situated 3. and that part of the Karnatik which rested on tha Deccan plateau above the Eastern Ghats.

The First Anglo-French War 1744-48. The war of Austrian succession in Europe led to open conflict between the two nations. Early in 1740 La Bourdonnais, who was the Governor of the Isles of France and Bourbon, formed the attacking the English ship in India. But the French Government. desired neutrality in seas and did not sanction the expedition. When the war was declared, La Bourdonnais was asked to take the offensive but he could not be ready till 1746. Dupleix and La Bourdonnais planned a joint attack upon Madras and the lattr reached Pondichery in the beginning of July 1746 after defeating the English Commander Peyton who could offer no resistance to Dupleix and La Bourdonnais but they were soon overcome and the latter was persuaded in September to set sail for Madras and capture the town. After a short siege the English surrendered

and among the prisoners captured was Robert Clive, a young clerk in the Company's service destined to rise afterwards to a disposition of prominence in Indian politics. Having seized Madras, La Bourdonnais suggested that the English should be allowed to ransom their settelement but Dupleix strongly opposed the proposal. Despite Dupleix's opposition La Bourdonnais at last signed a convention agreeing to release the settelment for a sum of £ 4,00,000. This led to a bitter quarrel between the two and we come across the following entry in Anand Ranga Pillai's diary[1]:

> "The ways of Europeans who used always to act in unison have apparently now become like those of native Muhammadans".

La Bourdannais refused to recognize Dupleix's authority and openly flouted his orders. Dupleix retaliated by declaring him a rebel and by asking the army officers not to obey his orders. Luckily owing to bad weather La Bourdannais was driven back to the Isles and his ships were destroyed, Dupleix seized Madras and organized a large force to repel the attacks of the Nawab and the English Company. When the Nawab laid seige to the town, his forces were driven back and the prestige of the French army was established in the Carnatic. This was not all. With Madras secure in his hands, Dupleix declared the agreement entered into by La Bourdannais with the English Company as null and void and carried the English governor and soldiers as prisoners to Pondichery where they adorned a stately procession held in honour of the victorious governor. Then Dupliex sent a force to attack Fort St. David but it was repulsed by Stringer Lawrence, one of the most capable and patriotic officers in the company's service. In the meantime, an English squadron appeared and laid seige to Pondichery. But the place was so bravely defended that the English had to withdraw with heavy loss. The place of Aix La Chapple in 1748 brought the war of the Austrian Succession to a close. The news reached India in 1749 and peace was made. Madras was restored to the English in exchange for Louis bourg in North America which was restored to the French. The result of the war was the increase of French prestige and the encouragement to Dupleix's bold and audacious designs. He began to take interest in the politics of the Indian courts and slowly to develop the idea of founding a French empire on Indian soil.

La Bourdonnais on his return to France was accused of thwarting the designs of Dupleix and of doing a grave injury to French interest in India. He was thrown into the Bastille though

1. Vol. II, p. 359.

he was released after three years. His quarrel with Dupleix was much magnified and when public opinion ranged itself on the side of the Governor-General, his position became much stronger and he began to plan excursions into the dangerous region of Indian politics.

Second Anglo-French War.—Dupleix clearly saw the advantage of his improved position. He was little interested in trade and cared less for its profits. He had an inborn capacity for diplomacy and intrigue and was not unwilling to take part in the disputes of the Indian princes. He loved pomp and power and felt convinced that by confining themselves merely to trade, the French will not be able to outstrip their rivals in the race for supremacy. The last war had changed the character and complexion of the rivalry between the two nations. Each had developed an eagerness, not shown before, for war and intrigue. Each maintained an army and sought scope for its employment in the struggles between the chiefs and princes who were trying to profit by the confusion that had been caused by the rapid decline of the Mughal empire. Around them were Nawabs and Rajas who were asserting their claim to territories over which they had no control and unscrupulous adventurers, Hindu and Muslim, who wished to carve out principalities for themselves. The temptation to offer succour to such men was great indeed, and the English were the first to yield to it. They espoused the cause of a prince who had been expelled from the throne of Tanjore by his brother. Though the expedition did not result in much gain to the English, it was treated as a precedent by Dupleix for interfering in the affairs of Indian potentates. The disputed succession to one of the most important principalities in South India furnished an occasion for such interference.

Asaf Jah Nizam-ul-Mulk died in June 1748 at the ripe old age of 104. He had a number of sons. In the absence of his eldest son Ghaziuddin who lived at Delhi, the throne was claimed by his second son Nasir Jung who happened to be present at Aurangabad at the time of his father's death. But his claim was contested by Muzaffar Jung, a grandson of the Nizam by a daughter, who gave out that his grandfather had nominated him to the throne by a will. The death of the aged Nizam who had maintained some semblance of order in South India plunged the whole country into confusion and out of the intrigues, jealousies and rivalries that accompanied the disputed succession arose the struggle which is known in history as the war of the Carnatic. Dupleix welcomed this opportunity of increasing his power. He promptly offered help to Muzaffar Jung in the hope of creating a strong French party at the Nizam's court. At the same time he extended his help to Chanda Saheb, a scion of the superseded

family of Nawabs in the Carnatic who was a competitor for the throne with Anwaruddin. He had been captured by the Marathas but he was released in 1748 and Dupleix claimed that his release was due to his good offices. Chanda Saheb made common cause with Muzaffar Jung and helped him in raising men and money. Both made a combined attack on Anwaruddin, the Nawab of the Carnatic, who was an old man of 107, with the help of French troops, and defeated and killed him in the battle of Amber. His brother and elder son were taken prisoners and his second son Muhammad Ali fled to Trichinopoly of which place he had been appointed governor by his father. His cause was espoused by the English.

After the battle of Amber, Carnatic passed into the hands of Chanda Saheb and he rewarded the French by granting them the villages of Villiyanalleur, Valudavur and the seaport of Masulipatam and the village of Bahur was ceded by Muzaffar Jung who now claimed the Subahdarship of the Deccan. Dupleix urged upon his allies the necessity of making a concentrated attack upon Trichinopoly but they wasted time against Tanjore where the Raja held them back and reduced them to inaction for three months. The English encouraged the Raja in his attempts to beat them off. The French had informed him that he could receive help from Nasir Jung, the rightful claimant to the Nizamship. They sent a force to help Muhammad Ali and warned Nasir Jung of the danger which was likely to arise from the success of Muzaffar Jung and Chanda Saheb. Nasir Jung marched into the Carnatic at the head of a huge army assisted by a British contingent of 600 men under Major Lawrence. Chanda Saheb and his allies atonce raised the siege of Tanjore and fell back upon Pondichery. Nasir Jang continued his advance and he was joined by a British force. Disheartened by the conduct of the French, Muzaffar Jung surrendered to Nasir Jang and was made a prisoner by him. Dupleix faced the crisis with great ability and resourcefulness. His officers captured Jinji and Masulipatam and when Nasir Jang marched from Arcot where he had been staying after his victory, his progress was impeded by the rains and he was defeated owing to the treachery of his Pathan feudatories whom Dupleix had seduced by intrigue. In a skirmish that ensued Nasir Jang was killed and Muzaffar Jang was proclaimed Subehdar of the Deccan at Pondichery in December 1750. Dupleix's prestige rose very high, he received from the new Nizam the towns of Diri and Masulipatam and large sums of money. He rewarded the troops lavishly and gave the company a sum of £50,000. Dupleix himself received £2,00,000 and a Jagir consisting of the village Valdavur, yielding an income of £10,000 a year. The new Nizam acknowledged Dupleix as the suzerain of South India

though the new title conferred upon him did not give him any direct administrative control over the territories of which he was declared the overlord. Even in the Carnatic Chanda Saheb enjoyed the Nawabship until his death.

Muzaffar Jang now started from Pondichery his Capital in January 1751, escorted by the celebrated French General Bussy at the head of a French force, but scarcely had the march begun when the dissatisfied Pathan chiefs of Cuddapah, Kurnool and Savanur created trouble and in the confusion that followed Muzaffar Jang and some of his chief supporters were killed. But Bussy acted with coolness and courage. He set aside Muzaffar Jang's infant sons on the ground that it was impossible for a minor to be at the head of the government of the Deccan at such a time and placed upon the throne Salabat Jang, the third son of the late Asaf Jah. He was escorted to Haiderabad and Bussy remained there for seven years maintaining by his skill and tact the ascendency of the French in their privileges and conferred upon Bussy the rank of a Mughal nobleman.

While all this was going on, the English had on the whole shown firmness in supporting the cause of Muhammad. Ali. They saw clearly that their position in South India depended upon the safety of Muhammad Ali and, therefore, they decided to stand by him through thick and thin. To engage in war at this time was difficult for England and France were at peace and the English and French troops in India could not fight only as helpers of the Indian provinces. The show of peace could not be maintained for long and the Carnatic was soon plunged into a long and tedious war which produced serious consequences. The Rajas of Tanjore and Mysore were drawn into it and the Marathas were not slow to take advantage of the situation that had arisen.

Chanda Saheb marched against Trichinopoly and in collaboration with his allies laid siege to it. The town was about to fall when a diversion was suggested by Robert Clive, a young subaltern of 26 in the English Company's service. A bold attempt was made in 1751 to capture Arcot, the capital of the Carnatic, in the hope that Chanda Saheb, on hearing of the news about his capital, would send a part of his army to its relief. The plan was approved by the Governor and Clive advanced at the head of a considerable force and captured Arcot without a blow. Chanda Saheb despatched nearly half of his army under his son Reza Saheb for the defence of Arcot. For fifty-three days Clive heroically withstood the seige in which the Indian and European troops displayed conspicuous valour. The seige of Arcot is a memorable episode in Indian history. It greatly added to th fame of Clive as a general and relieved a dangerous situation.

Major Lawrence who had just returned from England marched to Trichinopoly along with Clive and laid seige to the fort. After the defeat of the French at Arcot the initiative had passed to the English and they were encouraged to deal effectively with their opponents. Dupleix advised the French General Law, nephew of the famous speculator, to check the progress of the English troops but he was forced to surrender with all his men (June 1752). Chanda Saheb who had relied far too much upon the generosity of his enemies also surrendered to the general of the Raja of Tanjore who had him treacherously beheaded. His death is a blot upon the fair name of the English for they did not exert themselves to save him. These reverses of the French and their allies lowered their prestige and left Muhammad Ali undisputed master of the Carnatic with the English as the only controlling authority: Dupleix who was always equal to his task in moments of difficulty and depression, tried to improve the situation but all his plans were foiled by Lawrence. There was much stubborn fighting and the English gained one victory after another. By the end of 1752 the French lost all their possessions except Jinji and Pondichery. So heavy were the losses that Bussy urged the Governor-General to make peace and himself succeeded later in re-establishing his influence at the Court of Haiderabad with difficulty and secured in 1753 the Northern Sirkars, the districts South of Orissa, comprising a large tract of land extending over nearly 600 miles along the coast. This was not a complete transfer but merely an assignment for the maintenanee of troops which were to fight for the Nizam. The French attempted to seize Trichinopoly again by a surprise attack but in vain. Trichinopoly was saved (November 1753) and a great danger to its safety was averted.

Both sides had grown tired of the war and negotiations for peace began. The French and the English Commissioners met at Sadras (January 1754), a Dutch settlement between Madras and Pondichery to discuss the terms but no agreement could be reached. The English demanded that Muhammad Ali should be recognized as the Nawab of the Carnatic, while the French insisted that Salabat Jang should be acknowledged as the Nizam and overlord of the Deccan. Dupleix produced *firmans* from Salabat Jang and the Emperor himself bestowing upon him the Nawabship of the Carnatic. The English checked the validity of the documents and produced *firmans* in favour of Muhammad Ali. No settlement could be reached and the conference ended in failure.

These arrangements, however, did not disturb the movement of the forces against Trichinopoly. The French could not be

easily driven off nor could the English take Trichinopoly by storm. During these operations two distinguished soldiers came to the front—one was Haider Ali who fought at the head of the Mysorean Auxiliary force and the other was Yusuf Khan, a brave and dauntless Hindu convert who led the Indian sepoys in the service of the English and who afterwards gave Muhammad Ali great help in consolidating his authority.

While the affairs were in such a state, news came (August 1754) that orders had been issued for Dupleix's recall and Godeheu had been appointed governer in his place. Dupleix returned to Franee and died a broken and disappointed man after a protracted trial which impoverished him in 1764.

Soon after his arrival Godeheu started negotiations with the English and the treaty of Pondichery was signed in January 1755. It was a provisional treaty the validity of which depended on the sanction of the companies at home. Both parties renounced all their titles and dignities and agreed not to interfere in the quarrels of Indian Princes. The English were to have Madras, Fort St. David and Devicotta and the French, Pondichery and a piece of territory equal to that of the English. It was further provided that the English should be allowed to possess Masulipatam or Dixi in the Northern Sirkars of parts of which they were already in occupation.

The treaty was unfavourable to the French; it ruined their hopes in the Carnatic and Dupleix's protest that Godeheu 'had signed the dishonour of the nation' was not wholly unjustified. The French historian Cultru, who has corrected many errors regarding French history, observes that Godeheu was wrong in bringing the war to an end. There is no reason to think that Godeheu was actuated by motives of jealousy or hatred towards Dupleix. Modern research has shown that the treaty was a wise step. The French troops sent from home were worthless and those in India were undisciplined and were demanding arrears of pay. The Pondichery Council had informed the Directors at home that peace was a prudent measure because with treasury empty and their troops 'almost without allies and in sore straits for gold' more unable to carry on the struggle. The military strength of the English was superior to that of the French who possessed only 1,150 troops of a miscellaneous character. Leading men like Admirals Watson and Peacock thought that the peace was highly disadvantageous to them and 'robbed them of an assured success', Godeheu knew his position well and although he pitched his demands too high in the beginning, he relaxed them afterwards when he learnt of the possible combination of Watson's fleet with the Marathas.

It is unjust to blame Godeheu for what happened to the French settlements in India. The treaty signed by him meant no humiliation for the French. They were promised territories which yielded a far larger income than those assigned to the English. Again, the peace was subject to the sanction of the authorities at home and it could not be enforced owing to the outbreak of the Seven Years' War which upset all arrangements in India. It was the outbreak of the war and not Godeheu's treaty which destroyed the French hopes of building up an Indian Empire. A modern writer rightly observes:

> "The plain truth is that the schemes of Dupleix, bold, ingenious, and far-reaching as they were had broken down. It was Godeheu's task to save what he could from the wreck. He succeeded to a greater extent than might have been expected, and afforded his countrymen an opportunity to recuperate—an opportunity of which they were unable to avail themselves to the full because a European war occurred before they had consolidated their strength."[1]

Dupleix's policy examined.

All writers speak highly of Dupleix's abilities, courage and patriotism. In the earlier stages, he thought more of personal gain but later he was actuated by honourable motives. His loyalty to his country has never been questioned. His mistake lay in the methods by which he sought to promote the glory and honour of his country. His love of pomp and power aroused the jealousy of the English and his assumption of the Nawabship of the Carnatic was a blunder which created great difficulties for him. It has been said that Dupleix was the first to conceive of an Indian Empire but this is not quite true. According to Dodwell, a modern writer, he had no conception of empire during his governorship of Chandranagar and had no political policy before 1752. But it is clear from his actions that he desired earlier to build up French influence and power at Indian courts by what a modern writer calls 'a calculated interference in native politics'. His initial successes were admirable but the policy of war injured the trade interests of the Company and his entanglement led to great embarrassment. Dupleix's hope that territories would yield a revenue which would compensate them for the loss of profits of trade was not realised. His great difficulty was finance. In five years he had spent 30 lakhs of the Company's money and a considerable proportion of these funds were absorbed by him. Little financial help could be obtained from France. The French ministers were not in a position to

(1) Roberts, History of British India, p. 116.

subsidise a commercial company that had embarked on a policy of war and political adventure. In 1754 the company's finances were at a low ebb; their affairs were under investigation and it was widely held that conquest and commerce could not go hand in hand. This was contrary to Dupleix's ideas for he believed that a fixed revenue from territories would be a great advantage. Dupleix incurred enormous expenditure in furthering his own scheme and wrote to his masters that he had spent his own private fortune in the company's service but the latter answered by saying that he had acquired revenues without their permission and had squandered them on wars which they had not sanctioned. Whatever the difficulties created by Dupleix's policy, it cannot be denied that he spent large sums on behalf of the Company and the latter ought to have gratefully acknowledged his help by granting him a decent pension. One thing must be said in defence of the company's policy. Dupleix's over-confidence and his uncompromising spirit created opposition to his policy and his desire to conceal his plans from his masters made them distrustful of his designs. In his dispatches he never mentions Clive's siege of Arcot and of Law's surrender at Trichinopoly. The Company as well as the Government of France did not extend to him their full co-operation. They couldnot sacrifice their trade interests elsewhere to Dupleix's ambition and did not want to risk them by provoking English opposition. They had realised that it was a mistake to allow a commercial company to acquire territory and put forward many arguments against Dupleix's policy. The supremacy which he had established was based on weak foundations and could not last long. Sir Alfred Lyall rightly says:

> "The whole fabric of territorial predominance which Dupleix had been so industriously building up was loosely and hastily cemented; it depended upon the superiority of a few mercenary troops, the perilous friendship of Eastern princes, and the personal qualities of those in command on the spot. It was thus exposed to all the winds of fortune and had no sure foundation."[1]

Dupleix's methods of administration were unsound. He did not always distinguish between private and public interests and the latter were often sacrificed to the former. His acceptance of presents led to corruption and lowered the *morale* of his officers. Besides, his wars proved unprofitable; they never paid their way and much of the money was spent on them had to be drawn from the Company's funds. The Carnatic was a poor province

1. Rise of British Dominion in India, p. 105.

lacking in resources and could not stand the strain of a long internecine war. Above all, Dupleix failed to realise that the supremacy of his country could not be established without breaking the power of the English at sea. The French navy in 1754 was weak and incapable of resisting the English, and the true cause of the failure of the French in India, is to be found in the naval disasters of the Seven Years' War.

Dupleix has had a large number of detractors and admirers. Colonel Malleson describes him as a great administrator with a wonderful power of organization and blames the French Government for not giving him the help which he so richly deserved. Thornton says he was vain and ambitious and Vincent Smith who is more hostile writes that he was devoid of moral scruples in many matters and accuses him of lack of military talent and personal valour. Another with all the weight of his authority is of opinion that his bent was in the direction of intrigue and that he was an adventurer and an opportunist. All these are exaggerated estimates. Dupleix was a man of splendid gifts, far-reaching vision and an undaunted spirit that never quailed before danger but he was hasty and lacked a calm judgment. His failure was due not so much to personal defects as to causes that were largely beyond his control. Mr. Roberts is right in saying:

> "But in spite of his final failure, Dupleix is a striking and brilliant figure in Indian History. But even if we give up the old uncritical estimate, we need not deny his real claims to greatness. His political conceptions were daring and imaginative. He raised the prestige of France in the East for some years to an amazing height; he won a reputation among Indian princes and leaders that has never been surpassed, and he aroused a dread in his English contemporaries which is atonce a tribute to his personal power and a testimony to their sagacity." [1]

1. History of British India, pp. 118-19.

Colonel Malleson's view of Dupleix's character will be found interesting:

> "These four French names (Dupleix, La Bourdonnais, Bussy, and Lally) shine out as bright lights among a crowd of flickering satellites. It is they, or rather for he stands out far above the others—it is Dupleix, the lustre of whose great name reflects the struggles of his countrymen for empire in the east. He did it all. He was unsupported except by Bussy. He it was who caused the fame of the French nation to resound in the palaces of Delhi, who carved out a policy which his rivals

Bussy in the Deccan.

After the murder of Nasir Jang in 1750 Muzaffar Jang was proclaimed Nizam and was escorted to Haiderabad by a French contingent headed by Bussy. Muzaffar Jang was killed in an encounter with the Pathan Nawabs and his successor Salabat Jang owed his elevation to the *Masnad* largely to French help. The Nizam confirmed the grants and privileges enjoyed by the French and from 1751 onwards Bussy and other French soldiers were lavishly rewarded by him. In 1752 the Nawabship of the Carnatic was granted to Dupleix who assumed it with great pomp and munificence. The various concessions made to the French were apparently of great importance but in fact they were insignificant. The cost of the maintenance of the contingent at Haiderabad was almost the same as the income from the Northern Sirkars. These concessions to the French aroused jealousy at the Nizam's court and a hostile party was formed. But French influence was strengthened by a number of causes.

The Marathas like the English did not like the French influence at the Nizam's court. Under their Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao they invaded the Deccan and marched to Aurangabad to support the claims of Ghaziuddin, the eldest son of the Nizam-ul-Mulk, who had so far remained in Delhi and kept himself aloof from the war of succession. Balaji invited the English at Bombay and Madras to help him but no effective assistance was received from either place.

The Marathas advanced into the Nizam's country at the head of a strong force. So great was the danger that Bussy intended to retire to Masulipatam with Salabat Jang but the death of Ghaziuddin by poison at Aurangabad (October 1752) rid the French of one of their enemies. Bussy now turned towards the Marathas. Although he could not defeat them, he was able to check their progress and made peace with them. Thus was the crisis averted and Salabat Jang was maintained in his throne with French help. The district of Kondavid near Masulipatam was given to Bussy by the Nizam to show his gratitude for the services rendered and French influence remained supreme at his court.

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seized and followed. He did not succeed, because he was not properly supported at home, because he was alone among his countrymen in India."

History of the French in India, p. 583.

Again it is the same writer who says: 'It was Dupleix who made French India, it was France who lost it'.

But a new danger threatened the French. A new party arose at the Nizam's Court headed by Lashkar Khan, the Minister who was hostile to French interests. The cost of the French contingent was a great drain on the finances and the French were accused of squandering the Nizam's wealth. Bussy had returned to Masulipatam owing to illness and during his absence Lashkar Khan succeeded in fomenting ill-feeling against the French and corresponded with the English to find ways and means of overthrowing the influence of Bussy at his court.

Dupleix who saw the danger clearly advised Bussy to return to Haiderabad immediately (1753) and resume his duties. The Nizam was too feeble to resist Bussy and the latter re-established his influence and secured from the Nizam the districts of Guntur, Rajamundry, Ellore and Chicacole permanently for the maintenance of French troops. He almost compelled the Nizam to keep a body guard of French soldiers and not to interfere in the affairs of the Carnatic (1753).

Thus was French authority established in the Sirkars but the course of the Carnatic war and the treaty of Pondichery weakened Bussy's position and created an unfavourable impression about the French. In 1755 he got another opportunity of maintaining French influence in the Deccan. Salabat Jang demanded arrears of tribute from Mysore as the representative of the Mughal Emperor and marched into the country which was at that time invaded by the Marathas. The Mysoreans were the allies of the French and Bussy found himself in an awkward predicament. But by his tact and skill he brought about peace between the Nizam and the Marathas and secured satisfaction of the Nizam's claims against Mysore (1755). The anti-French party, meanwhile, fully worked against the French general under the leadership of Shah Nawaz Khan the new minister, who poisoned the ears of Salabat Jang against Bussy and by bringing charges of treason against him brought about his dismissal in 1756. He returned to Haiderabad and made military preparations to defend himself against attack and entrenched himself in a fortified place. The Nizam appealed to the English for help but they could do nothing for just at this time Calcutta had fallen and the new situation in Bengal demanded their fullest and most urgent attention. Once again Bussy was able to give a short thrift to his enemies and re-established his influence at the Nizam's court in August 1756.

When the Seven Years' War broke out, Bussy was busy in the Northern Sirkars in consolidating his position. He seized the English factories on the coast and reduced to submission the refractory and lawless Zamindars, chief of whom was the Raja of Bobbili,. whose fortress was taken by assault. Bussy's power

received a fresh accession of strength and it is said that he was asked by Sirajudowlah to march into Bengal to help him against the English.

The enemies of Bussy again intrigued against him and this time a conspiracy was formed by the minister to expel the French and place upon the throne Nizam Ali, one of the Nizam's younger brothers. Bussy proceeded to deal with the crisis in 1758 and tried to restore Salabat Jang's authority but in the confusion that followed, the minister, the arch leader of the conspiracy was killed, and Nizam Ali who was a craven-hearted fellow took to flight.

Thus did Bussy again triumph over his enemies and establish order at Haiderabad. Soon after he was re-called by Count de Lally to Pondichery and asked to assume the command of the French troops. Clive who watched these developments with anxiety sent Colonel Forde who defeated the French at Condore in December 1758 and captured Masulipatam a few months later. The French influence at the Nizam's court was destroyed and Salabat Jang, overwhelmed by the success of the English ceded to them Masulipatam with a strip of land eighty miles long and twenty miles wide to the British and declared his intention not to seek French help in future.

The closing days of Bussy's life were full of sadness and sorrow. He was taken prisoner by Sir Eyre Coote in 1760 and was sent to England. He was released there and allowed to go to France where he was confronted with serious charges. After a trial of two years he was condemned to death although the charges were not proved against him.

Bussy was a man of remarkable abilities, tact and courage. He was a diplomat to his fingertips and by his skill and patience maintained French influence at the Court of the Nizam. He was a brave soldier. Had he been allowed to take part in the Carnatic wars he might have been of great use to Dupleix. But the power which he had built up in the Deccan rested on weak foundations and disappeared soon after his departure. Bussy's contribution to the administration of Indian territories by foreigners consists in the method of Indian rulers. His example was afterwards followed by Clive in Bengal. Dodwell writes :

> "Clive's relations with Jafar Ali were just the same as Bussy's with Salabat Jang ....Less smooth and debonnaire, his (Clive's) forceful character and more secure position enabled him to obtain an even greater ascendency than Bussy had been able to accomplish........... but apart from these differences in character and

position, Clive had to encounter the same problems as Bussy and commonly adopted the solution which the latter had devised."[1]

The Third Anglo-French Conflict (1758-63)

Dupleix had left in 1754 and after his departure important events had taken place in India. The Nawabi was overthrown in Bengal and the English had established their supremacy by the battle of Plassey in 1757. In the Carnatic the English and the French had enjoyed peace for four years (1754-58). But when the Seven Years' War broke out in Europe, the French Government resolved to attack the English settlements in India and for this purpose they sent out a force under Comte de Lally, an obstinate and headstrong soldier, who landed in India in April 1758. The object which the French Government had in view was two-fold — (1) the restoration of their finances, (2) and the establishment of their commercial monopoly by the total expulsion of the English from India. They warned him against following the methods of Dupleix and Bussy, who, it was now believed, had done a great injury to national interests. Lally was clearly instructed not to strive for territorial aggrandisement but to attack the English settlements on the coast and deprive them of their commercial property.

Lally was a brave soldier who was passionately devoted to the interests of France. But he was quite unfit for the task that was entrusted to him. He was a man of violent and irascible temper, 'a stiff-necked martinet', who burst out into fury at the slightest opposition. Himself incorruptible and conscientious, he did not know how to behave towards his subordinates, and treated them with great harshness. His hot temper and habitual threats created many enemies for him both inside and outside his camp. He utterly failed to win the confidence of his French subordinates and Indian allies and his hasty and rash attempts to reform the company's administration made him unpopular with the corrupt men of his time. According to Dodwell an impossible task was confided to a man possessed of energy and talent, but lacking all sense of statesmanship.

If the French expeditionary force had arrived in India early in 1756, it might have secured a great advantage over the English, for by June they had been driven out of the Calcutta and their affairs in Bengal were in a highly critical condition. After the Bengal revolution, any attempt by the French to establish their power would have been disastrous to the English. But

1. Dodwell-Dupleix and Clive, p. 102.

Lally arrived too late. By April 1758 when he reached India, the Nawabi had been overthrown, the English had become the masters of Bengal and Clive was free to send men and money to South India against the French.

Soon after landing on the sea-coast Lally marched against Fort St. David which he captured without much opposition. Then he turned towards Madras but dissensions in his own camp prevented him from taking immediate action. Besides being short of money and supplies, he was much hampered by the unwillingness of the French Admiral D'Ache to co-operate with him. He made an attempt to obtain money from the Raja of Tanjore but the latter offered resistance and the expedition proved fruitless. Bussy was also called from Haiderabad despite his entreaties to be allowed to remain there and thus an irreparable blow was given to French influence at the Nizam's court. Little did Lally realise that Bussy's recall was a blunder of the first magnitude for it meant the substitution of English for French influence in the Deccan. Bussy obeyed the order fearing the consequence of insubordination.

Lally's desire was to seize the English settlements one by one and he prepared to attack Madras. The siege began in December 1758 but before this was done Clive had sent from Calcutta Colonel Forde to drive the French out of the Northern Sirkars. He won a great victory over them at Condore and severely damaged their influence at the Nizam's court.

A few days before the battle began the siege of Madras. But the place was well fortified and the lack of supplies from Pondichery where Lally was heartily hated greatly added to his difficulties. But Lally persevered in the siege till February 1759 when an English fleet appeared on the coast. The siege was raised and Lally beat a hasty retreat to the astonishment of the Indian powers. The defence of Madras was ably conducted by Lawrence, the British Commander, and Pigot, the Governor, who had stocked it with ample provisions. Clive's diversion was also of great use for Colonel Forde had dealt a deadly blow to the enemy's prestige in the Sirkars. The English now captured Masulipatam after a feeble resistance and this was followed by a treaty between them and the Nizam containing provisions highly favourable to the English.

Lally's situation was desperate. Admiral D'Ache had returned to the Coromandel coast after fighting an unsuccessful action with the British fleet. The council at Pondchery did not support Lally and he fretted and fumed over what he regarded as rank sedition and disloyalty. His troops became demoralised

and in desperation thought of opening terms with the enemy. There was no hope of getting any help from France; the troops clamoured for pay and the shifty expedients to which the haughty General resorted in impotent rage and despair proved wholly unavailing.

It was at this time that Colonel Coote (afterwards Sir Eyre Coote) inflicted a crushing defeat upon the French at Wandewash and captured the fort by assault in 1760. Bussy was taken prisoner and the French losses were heavy indeed. Lally, beaten and baffled, had to fall back upon Pondichery.

Seeing that the chances of success were extremely remote, Lally turned to Haider Ali of Mysore for help. He had already started negotiations with Basalat Jang, one of the Nizam's brothers and the Maratha leader, Muratf Rao but to no pur pose. The ambitious Haider who wanted Madura and Tinnevelly entered into alliance with the French and lent them the aid of his troops. But on realising that the contest was an unequal one, his forces withdrew leaving his allies to their fate. The English had laid siege to Pondichery which was entirely without supplies and a strong garrison. Still it held out till January 1761 but when Coote opened fire on the defenders, surrender became inevitable.

The fall of Pondichery was followed by the reduction of Jinji and Mahe on the Malabar coast. The fortifications were dismantled and the town was not restored to the French until the Peace of Paris (1763). Lally was sent a prisoner to France where he was confronted with charges of treason by his ungreatful countrymen who ordered him to be beheaded in 1766.

As Mr. Roberts rightly says the fall of Pondichery sounded the death knell of French in India. The French lost all their possessions. The ascendancy of the English was completely established both in Bengal and in South India. Muhammad Ali was recognized as Nawab of the Carnatic; the Nizam was freed from French influence and the Northern Sirkars were secured for the English. These acquisitions were afterwards ratified by an imperial decree.

The last attempt of the French to re-establish their ascendency was made when war broke out between the two nations in 1778. The French Admiral Suffrein set out with a fleet and engaged the English in a few contests on the Coromandel Coast but without any lasting success. The last struggle for supremacy of the French was ended by the Treaty of Versailles in 1783. Henceforward we shall see the French making similar attempts

during the revolutionary and Napoleanic wars and these will be described in a later chapter.

Causes of French Failure.

In analysing the causes of French failure in India we must lay sufficient stress not merely on the ill-luck or incapacity of individuals but on the wider combination of circumstances that decided against France her great contest with England. The English Company was commercially a superior body and its finances were well-organized. A good business is the essential condition of the success of a company but we find startling disclosures made by Abbe Moreliet's scrutiny into the French Company's accounts. The value of the sale of Indian goods in France from 1736 to 1756 was about £11,450,000 while that of the English Company amounted to £41,200,000. According to the same authority between 1725 and 1769 the Company had lost capital amounting to 169 millions of Francs and the advance made to the Company by Government during this period mounted to the figure of 376 millions. The wars of the Company cost a great deal and brought about the exhaustion of its resources, well and never lost sight of the fact that it was primarily a commercial concern and therefore could not afford to lose its profits. Thus we find that even during the war the value of their exports increased while the trade of the French Company rapidly declined. Dupleix did not take much interest in trade and preferred a career of military conquest to commerce. This was a mistake for France was entangled in many disputes in Europe and it was not possible to maintain an eastern Empire, if acquired.

The organization of the English Company was superior to the French. The former was managed by a private body of Directors, with resources so considerable that it lent large sums to Government and exercised not a little influence on public affairs. The French Company on the one hand depended for support on the State and its misfortunes were not a little due to the incompetent ministers of Louis XV. The lack of proper management, the constant interference in its affairs by rapacious officers who cared much for personal gain, and the sacrifice of colonial and mercantile interests to the love of military glory and reknown in Europe made the Company weak and helpless against the English. It was merely a department of the State and the proprietors took no interest in its affairs beyond taking interest on their capital which was guaranteed to them by the State. There was no encouragement to individual initiative or enterprise in matters of foreign trade and the result was that when official help ceased or became tardy, the interests of the company

woefully suffered. The Company's operations were much hampered by lack of funds and it was impossible for the State to grant permanent subsidies to enable it to carry on its work. The English Company was fully supported by the whole nation which took a keen interest in its affairs and the English ministers, agents of a free Parliament, controlled by the national will were far more capable, prudent and far-sighted than the irresponsible officials of France who were mostly chosen from the ranks of courtiers.

In Great Britain, Holland and other countries it was private enterprise that developed foreign trade and promoted large undertakings but in France nothing was done by the people. There was no trading class in France as in England and the Dutch countries. The agents of the French Company borrowed money on personal credit and ultimately it was its insolvency which ruined it.

Again, the leaders of the English Company in India were far abler, more patriotic and united than those of the French Company. Dupleix and Bussy, although able and energetic, were far inferior to men like Lawrence and Clive and were incapable of taking a long view of things. The English acted as a unit and never allowed private differences to injure national interests whereas the French officials quarrelled among themselves and their mutual bickerings and jealousies not only hampered their military operations but also dislocated the administration and destroyed the chances of success against the English. Dupleix and Lally were not well served by their subordinates but Clive received full support from the civil authorities. Saunders and Pigot gave the fullest co-operation to Clive, Lawrence and Coote have contributed a great deal to the success which they achieved. The qualities of leadership, resourcefulness, intrepidity and organization were more conspicuous among the English officers than among the French.

The military strength of the English was superior to that of the French. Their troops were better trained, equipped and disciplined and were strong on the mainland and most of the battles fought on land were victories for the English. As Sir Alfred Lyall rightly observes, the two essential conditions of success whether commercial or military in India were (1) the establishment of strong *points d'appui* on the coast and (2) the maintenance of a naval force that could keep communications with Europe. The French lacked both. They had been beaten on the sea and their naval power had suffered heavy blows. The English, on the contrary, had established their naval superiority on the seas and this favourably reacted on their Indian plans. The

important part played by sea power in the struggles between the two nations has been ably discussed by Mahan in his valuable work on sea power but we must remember that it is only one of the factors that decided the ultimate issue.

The acquisition of Bengal was of great importance to the English. It placed at their disposal the resources of a large, well populated and wealthy province. It gave them the sinews of war and a firm base of operations on the Indian mainland. With Bengal in their possession they could easily march into the interior of the country and bring under their control more extensive territories. The services rendered by Clive greatly advanced the Company's interests and established their prestige in the country.

Besides these causes the moral conditions that existed in France had not a little to do with the failure of the French Company. The new movement of thought which had begun in France did not favour colonial enterprise and condemned the subordination of civil to ecclesiastical interests. In England the spirit of tolerance and the progressive outlook of the people created a temper which well accorded with the ambition to establish political power abroad. The liberal principles of the 18th century which influenced English society helped the growth of commerce and made them indifferent to religious questions.

From 1763 onwards the decline of the French was very rapid. They were defeated on all the seas and their position in India grew weaker and weaker. A distingnished writer observes :

> "By 1763 the French dominion in India was completely suppressed, and by 1770 their company became bankrupt. This left the English East India Company master of the field, and laid the foundation of the British empire in India. The epoch is one of pre-eminent importance in the history of the rise of our dominion ; for thence forward the contest for ascendancy is between the English and the native powers only—a contest of which the issue was in reality so far from being doubtful, invisible, or amazing, that it could be and was already foreseen and deliberately foretold."[1]

1. Lyall, Rise of British Dominion in India, p. 122.

CHAPTER IV

Revolution in Bengal

Murshid Quli Khan as Governor of Bengal

So far we have had to deal with the struggle of the European powers for supremacy in the South, into which the Indian States were dragged against their will. A passing reference was made in the last chapter to the affairs of Bengal which exercised a profound influence on the fortunes of the English Company. Each of the three European nations, the English, the French and the Dutch had established their settlements in Bengal and originally their object was the development of their trade. Their chief centres were upon the banks of the Hugli. The English had established themselves at Calcutta, the French at Chandernagar, and the Dutch at Chinsurah. During the wars that had broken out in the South between the rival nations, the English and the French settlements in Bengal had lived on terms of peace and kept themselves aloof from internecine strife. The Mughal Subahdar of Bengal was a strict man, he kept them under control with the result that they confined themselves to trade and did not meddle with politics and war. The situation soon changed and gradually the English acquired political power. How this was done will be described at some length.

Bengal was originally a province of the Mughal Empire and was governed by a Subahdar who represented the Imperial authority. In 1701 a Brahman convert to Islam named Murshid Quli Khan was appointed Dewan of the Empire in Bengal. Owing to a quarrel with the Viceroy, he transferred himself to Muksabad to which in 1704 he gave the name of Murshidabad. He was a powerful man and his growing influence enabled him to exact from the English a sum of Rs. 25,000 in lieu of the permission which he granted them to establish a factory at Qasimbazar. In 1713 he became Governor of the Province and repeated his exactions. The English had to escape from the vexatious demands by obtaining a *firman* from Delhi which legalised their position and gave them a status which the Dutch and the French did not possess. Murshid Quli Khan was a strong ruler. He kept order within his realm as long as he lived by suppressing the refractory elements. It was during his time that the house of

Jagat Seth, which played an important part in the overthrow of the Nawab, rose into prominence. The family owed its origin to a Jain merchant named Manik Chand who died in 1732, who was succeeded during his lifetime in business by his nephew Fateh Chand who was appointed Imperial Banker and given the title of Jagat Seth. After his death, his inheritance devolved upon his grandsons Mehtab Rai and Maharaja Swarup Chand who influenced not a little the course of Bengal politics during the Nawabi regime.

Alivardi Khan

Murshid Quli Khan died in 1725 and was succeeded by his son-in-law-Shuja Khan, a Persian nobleman, who had entered his service. Among the latter's favourites were two brothers Haji Ahamad and Alivardi Khan, who were employed by him to do certain menial offices. In 1729 Alivardi Khan was put in charge of the frontier province of Bihar. Gradually he became so powerful that after Shuja Khan's death in 1739 he overpowered his son Sarfaraz Khan and himself became the Nawab of Bengal. But he was not allowed to live in peace. The Marathas invaded Bengal and Alivardi Khan purchased peace by ceding to them Orissa and by promising to pay twelve lakhs of rupees annually to liquidate all their claims. He was confirmed in his viceroyalty by the Mughal Emperor through the good offices of the Wazir who was to receive 52 lakhs a year. Alivardi Khan was very fond of his grandson (by a daughter) Mirza Muhammad better known in history as Sirajudowlah who was getting impatient to succeed to the Masnad. According to the author of the *Sair-ul-matakharin* he was a profligate and capricious young man but Alivardi Khan condoned all his faults and in 1752 publicly declared him as heir. In order to secure his heir's position, the old Nawab attached to him a strong court party consisting of Mir Jafar, his brother-in-law who was Bakhshi (Pay Master) of the forces, Rai Durlabh Dewan, who held a command in the army and the Seths who wielded enormous influence by reason of their wealth. Having done this, Alivardi Khan died in 1756 at the ripe old age of 82 and his character has been well described by Orme:

> "His public character is sufficiently delineated by his actions, his private life was very different from the usual manners of a Muhammedan prince, for he was always extremely temperate, had no pleasures, kept no seraglio and always lived the husband of one wife."

The relations between the Nawab and the English were not quite cordial in the time of Alivardi Khan. During the Maratha

invasion he had allowed them to fortify their settlements and they had built the Great ditch for the safety of Calcutta. But he was strongly opposed to attempt at independence and refused to allow them to take shelter behind the royal *firman* when they did any thing which was likely to interfere with his authority. He did not grant them permission to build forts and said 'you are merchants, what need have you of a fortress. Being under my protection, you have no enemies to fear.'

He was well aware of what had happened in South India and was determined not to allow the foreigners to meddle in the affairs of Bengal. He did not want to drive them out of India although he had a presentiment of the coming danger. He used to compare the Europeans to a hive of bees, of whose honey you might reap the benefit, but that if you disturbed the hive they would sting you to death. The British complained that they were not allowed to enjoy the privileges granted by Farrukhsiyer's *firman* of 1717 to which the Nawab replied that they abused their position and inflicted injury to the interests of the country and the Government. Captain Rennie who wrote before the disaster of Fort William writes that the English took under their protections Indians who were neither their servants nor merchants and gave them *dastaks* or passes to trade free of customs and this caused a serious loss to the Nawab's revenue. Besides, they levied large duties on goods brought into their area from the very people who allowed them free trade and imposed a number of taxes on them which caused much discontent. Thus it is clear that there were causes of friction between the Nawab and the English even under Alivardi Khan and Hill rightly observes:

> "It is evident that all the materials for a quarrel were ready long before the accession of Sirajudowlah".

Causes of quarrel with Sirajudowlah

Alivardi Khan's death at such a critical moment aggravated the situation. His successor Sirajudowlah was a man of perverse ideas and his character was vitiated as much by the indulgence of his own appetites as by the overgenerous treatment of his doting grandfather. From the very beginning he disliked the English and ill-treated the Hindus and the Seths who constituted an influential section of his subjects. The Hindus in turn did not like the Nawab's ways and heartily desired the overthrow of his Government. Thus the fall of the Nawabi in Bengal was due not merely to the audacity and intrigues of the foreign traders but to the treachery of the Nawab's own officers and the sudden discontent of the Hindus who conspired with the English

to bring about his ruin. The causes of antipathy between the Nawab and the English may be briefly summarised. At the time of the Nawab's accession, the English had made no presents, and although the French and the Dutch also had done nothing of the kind, he was incensed bitterly against the English and resented their arrogance. Fearing trouble, when the French fortified their factories, the Nawab asked them not to do so. The French obeyed but the English returned the insolent answer that they apprehended a repetition of what had happened in the Carnatic. Sirajudowlah was furious and he wrote:

> "I swear by the Great God and the prophets that unless the English consent to fill up their ditches, raze their fortifications, and trade upon the same terms as they did in the time of Nawab Jafar Khan, I will not hear anything on their behalf and will expel them totally out of my country."

Besides, the English claimed that they were not to pay any duty according to the privileges granted to them by the *firman* of 1717—a view which the Nawab refused to accept. Again it was said that the English gave shelter to the Nawab's subjects and refused to surrender them when their extradition was demanded. There was good reason why Sirajudowlah should seek to attack the English. Their settlement was rich and prosperous and their relations with the Hindu banking houses as well as the merchants were of a friendly nature. If he succeeded in driving the English out of Bengal, it will be easier for him to make short work of the other Europeans and rid the country of the danger which might at any moment develop into a serious menace to its safety and independence.

In view of the facts stated above it is not possible to accept Hill's view:

> "He had a show of reason in all the pretexts he alleged for his attack but his folly was when he resorted to violent means for reducing to submission the British who had been useful."

War with the Nawab

The Nawab began his attack by seizing the factory of Qasim Bazar and then advanced upon Calcutta at the head of an army of 50,000 men. The English were taken completely by surprise and appealed to the French and the Dutch for help, but in vain. The Muslim army was strong, it had European gunners and a French commander who began their onset in great fury. The fort was besieged and within the gates were heard the wails and

lamentations of women. A council of war was held and it was decided to send across the water men, women and children in boats for safety. Many other men jumped into these boats and rowed to the ships which were to carry the fugitives. Among those who left the factory in this discreditable manner were Mr. Drake, the Governor, Mr. Miqhen, the Commander of the garrison, Captain Grave and a few other men. The party landed at Fulta lower down the river. The garrison that remained behind elected Holwell as Governor, and offered resistance to the besiegers. They held out for sometime but in the end surrendered. Their effects formed part of the booty that was seized by the Nawab's soldiers.

What followed is known. It is said 146 prisoners were thrown into a small dungeon called afterwards the Black Hole. It was a small room 18×18 ft. in which 146 men, women and children were huddled together in the month of June. Holwell was among them. The heat of June was terrible and next morning when the doors were opened only twenty-three persons were found alive. This is the account of Holwell who was one of the survivors.

The Black Hole incident

The tragedy of the Black Hole has been attributed to the Nawab in most of the history books written by Anglo-Indian writers who have pointed the horrors of that day in most lurid light. Some modern writers whose researches deserve to be respected assert that the story of the Black Hole is a myth and that the Nawab had no knowledge of the cruelty that was shown to the prisoners by his officers. A full account of this episode will be given in an appendix to this chapter.

Recapture of Calcutta

When the news of the capture of Calcutta reached Madras, the English were furious with indignation. It was decided to send an expedition to Bengal atonce under the command of Clive who had just returned from England and was to be assisted by a squadron under Watson and Pocock.

Orme, the historian, writes that he urged upon the council the view that the recapture of Calcutta was a necessity and that a weak expedition will not only fail to re-establish British prestige, it will also weaken Madras. An advance guard under Major Kilpatrick was sent and it reached Fulta at the end of July. Clive and Watson sailed on the 16th October with a force of 900 European and 1,500 Indian soldiers and reached Calcutta after a long voyage in December. On the 2nd January

Calcutta was reconquered and an attack on Hugli a few days later was equally successful. Sirajudowlah brought his army to fight against the English but he was defeated. On the 18th January Clive opened negotiations and sent a letter to the Nawab in which he wrote:

> "We are come to demand satisfaction for the injuries done us by the Nawab not to entreat his favour and with a force which we think sufficient to vindicate our claim".

On the 9th February an offensive and defensive alliance was concluded between the Nawab and the English. The Nawab restored the English to their former position and granted them the privilege of coining money and fortifying their settlement and agreed to have an English agent at Murshidabad. Their treaty has been regarded as neither honourable nor sincere because it did not provide compensation for the sufferers of Black Hole or any guarantee for the fulfilment of the Nawab's promises.

Capture of Chandernagar

Though a treaty was made with the Nawab, Clive found himself in a difficult position. Indeed, the chief reason why he concluded this treaty was the fear of the French. Delay might have been fatal for Sirajudowlah had unmistakable French leanings and was likely to ally with them in order to crush the English. Besides, he was not a little hampered by Watson who was a King's officer and had contempt for the Company's servants. He understood nothing of civil matters and on occasions threatened to use force against Clive. Besides, the wide powers given him by the Madras authorities made him further obnoxious to the Council of Fort William and to men like Holwell. He was called back to Madras but he refused to go, saying that it would be most unwise to leave Calcutta at such a critical moment. The fear of a French attack was well grounded. Bussy was in the Northern Sirkars, within 100 miles from Calcutta and he was an ambitious and adroit soldier. To avert this danger, Clive and Watson turned their attention to Chandernagar and with difficulty obtained an 'ambiguous' letter from the Nawab purporting to grant them permission to advance upon the French settlement. An assault was ordered both by land and water and Chandernagar was captured (March 1957). The Nawab's attitude was atonce changed by the victory and Clive began to receive from him as many as ten letters a day. The Nawab was influenced by one other consideration. Ahmad Shah Durrani, the Afghan chief, had sacked Delhi in January 1757 and it was rumoured

that he was intending to invade Bengal and for this reason, as some modern writers say, the Nawab felt inclined to purchase English help by throwing the French over.[1]

The capture of Chandernagar was a great advantage to the English. It seriously impaired the prestige of the French and deprived the French islands of Bourbon and Mauritius of their supplies of grain from Bengal. It led ultimately to the weakening of the French fleets which might have otherwise enabled Lally to maintain his position in South India.

Conspiring to dethrone Siraj-ud-Dowlah

The Nawab soon realised that he had made a mistake in sacrificing the French. Clive also felt that war with the Nawab was only a question of time and feared a possible juncture between him and the French. The Nawab opened correspondence with Bussy asking him to come to his aid and this added to Clive's anxiety. His return to Madras without making Calcutta safe was impossible and the position of the English would have been jeopardised. If he had declared war upon the Nawab, he might have succeeded in defeating his rickety troops but he preferred another course. He resorted to intrigue in order to achieve his end. He became reckless of his methods and 'a hard dishonesty entered into his character'.[2] He wrote to Orme that he intended to employ 'tricks, chicanery, intrigue and the Lord knows what in order to gain his object'. We are told:

> "Ethics disappear from his conduct; we see him immersed in a scheme of things which may well strike us, as it evidently struck him, as fantastically unreal, a world of fancy whence all moral distinctions had vanished."[3]

Luckily for Clive, at this time a conspiracy was on foot at the Nawab's court to dethrone him and to place Mir Jafar, brother-in-law of Alivardi Khan, on the Masnad. The disloyal officers of the Nawab approached Clive and laid bare their intentions to him. Clive readily listened to their overtures for he knew that without the destruction of the Nawabi there would be no safety for the English. Thus he had no qualms of conscience in joining in a plot designed to overthrow the Nawab with whom he had recently signed a treaty of friendship. The Hindu Banker Jagat Seth, whom Sirajudowlah had treated shabbily and threa-

1. Thompson & Garrett, Fulfilment of British Rule in India, p. 88.
2. Thompson and Garrett, p. 89
3. Ibid. p. 89

tened with circumcision started negotiations with Clive through a certain Sikh merchant called Amin Chand (Omi- Chand) who was utterly unscrupulous and selfish. There was much ill-feeling against the Nawab. He had superseded his Dewan Rai Durlabh by a low favourite and threatened Mir Jafar with ruin. His cruel and capricious behaviour had alienated the court and the camp alike. The conspirators knew the difficulties of the Nawab; they knew he was not going to receive any help from the French, and, therefore, they desired to uproot his power with the help of Clive. As Mr. Roberts says one false step led almost inevitably to others. Amin Chand who acted as an agent in their nefarious intrigue wanted a commission of 5 per cent. for himself on the money to be found in the Nawab's treasury and a sum of 20 lakhs and threatened to divulge the whole plot in case his demand was not conceded. It was perhaps necessary to pay the hush money because the plot was not ripe and so Clive resorted to the expediency of a double treaty with Mir Jafar. His argument was that in a situation of the kind in which they were placed moral considerations must be set aside. Two agreements were drawn up—one on white paper which was genuine and one on red paper which was fictitious. In the fictitious document was embodied the clause about paying commission to Amin Chand. Both were to be signed by Clive, Watson and the Select Committee. Wason refused to sign and his signatures were forged by Clive. The ham agreement was shown to Amin Chand and he was satisfied. Clive himself says: "It was sent to Admiral Watson, who objected to the signing of it; but to the best of his remembrance gave the gentleman who carried it leave to sign his name upon it. That his Lordship never made any secret of it; he thinks it warrantable in such a case, and would do it again a hundred times. He had no interested motive in doing it, and did it with a design of disappointing the expectations of a rapacious man,"[1]

Clive's conduct was undoubtedly dishonourable and even the situation which the greed and selfishness of the parties had created afforded no justification for it.

A treaty was made withMir Jafar. In the event of getting the Nawabship he promised to confirm all the privileges enjoyed by the English, to surrender all French fugitives and factories to make good all English losses, to grant them permission to fortify their factories at Dacca and Qasimbazar and to recognize their supreme authority at Calcutta. He also promised to grant to the English the districts known as the 24 Parganas, to guarantee the Company a million sterling for the loss of Calcutta

1. Evidence of Clive before the Parliamentary Committee.

and to pay half a million to the European inhabitants. By a further stipulation large sums of money were to be paid to the officers of the army and the navy and the members of the Council. Thus did the traitor Mir Jafar sign his own humiliation and disgrace and became a willing instrument in the hands of Clive and his friends for the furtherance of their plans.

Battle of Plassey June 23, 1747

After this treaty, Clive wrote a letter to the Nawab summing up the company's wrongs and charging him with the violation of the treaty of 9th February. A mention was also made of his intrigues with the French. Without waiting for an answer, he marched from Calcutta at the head of 3,000 men of whom 800 were Europeans.[1] He crossed the Bhagirathi and halted in a mango-grove at Plassey, (Palasi), 23 miles south of Murshidabad where the Nawab was already encamped with an army of 50,000 men. What made Clive anxious was Mir Jafar's attitude for he was still wavering, and it was suspected that he would stand aside and await the issue of the battle. It was impossible to withdraw and on the 23rd of June was fought the historic Battle of Plassey in which the Nawab's troops were completely defeated. What else could be the result? A large part of the Nawab's army was commanded by Mir Jafar who had conspired to bring about his overthrow. This part remained inactive under their commander's instructions. He did not help the English either and only moved when the issue of the battle was no longer in doubt. The attack was launched by the Nawab's army in the morning to which the English suitably replied and in the afternoon the Nawab's camp was scattered. The only fighting worth the name was done by a contingent under Mir Madan and the forty or fifty brave Frenchmen who had come to the Nawab's help. There was general rout; the Nawab's army dispersed and he himself fled from the field of battle. By 5 s'clock the 'betrayed army' was turned into a routed rabble. The English losses amounted to 23 killed and 49 wounded. On the other side the number of men killed and wounded was about 500. English historians have called the Battle of Plassey a rout but what else could it be when the chief paymaster of the forces was acting the part of a traitor, unmoved either by loyalty to self or by the higher feeling of patriotism.

From the military point of view the battle of Plassey was insignificant. It added nothing to the military reputation of

1. Clive wrote : "The rains being daily increasing, and it is taking a great deal of time to receive your answer, I therefore, find it necessary to wait on you immediately".

Clive who had a small army and wanted to make a night attack. The order was given by another commander and it appears that the battle actually fought did not correspond with any design formed by Clive. Sir Alfred Lyall goes so far as to assert that it can hardly be called a battle. Still Clive took his place in the Irish Peerage as Baron Clive of Plassey.

The results of the battle were decisive. Next day, Mir Jafar was saluted as Nawab and was enthroned at Murshidabad by his allies. The treasury of the Nawab was rifled but it was found to contain not more than one and a half million sterling, although it was expected to yield much more. The Company obtained the Zamindari of the 24 Parganas yielding rents estimated at £1,50,000. Clive received £2,34,000 and the other servants of the Company were handsomely rewarded. Altogether, the Company and its men received three million sterling. Almost everyone shared in the loot. It has been rightly said:

'To engineer a revolution has been revealed as the most paying game in the world. A gold-lust unequalled since the hysteria that took hold of the Spaniards of Cortes and Pizarro's age filled the English mind. Bengal in particular was not to know peace again until it had been bled white.[1]

Amin Chand was told that he was to get nothing. Scratan told him in the language of Hindustan. "Omi Chand the red paper is a trick; you are to have nothing. Those words overpowered him like a blast of sulphur; he sunk back fainting, and would have fallen to the ground, had not one of his attendants caught arms."

Such was the rapacity of the company's officers. When they found that the Nawab's treasure was not sufficient to discharge his debts, they asked him to surrender his guards and pay the balance that was left by instalments.

These justifications of their transaction put forward in Cambridge History does not carry conviction.

"The sordid transactions detract from the glory of Clive's achievements. But in this matter Clive and his companions were but following the example of Dupleix and Bussy and were only doing what their contempories generally did."[2]

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2. Thompson and Garrett, pp. 91-92.

1. Cambridge History of India, Vol. II, p. 151.

Sirajudowlah was not discovered till some days after his flight. He was taken to the neighbourhood of Rajmahal and brought to Murshidabad late at night. If he had escaped into Bihar, Mir Jafar would have found it difficult to continue the Nawabi.

The only redeeming feature in Clive's character is that he frankly confessed his crime and never disguised it.

Sirajudowlah met with a cruel fate. He was captured and put to death by Miran, Mir Jafar's son, without his father's knowledge. His body was thrown on the back of an elephant and paraded through the streets of Murshidabad.

Reflections on the Battle of Plassey

The Battle of Plassey which has been described as a rout by Anglo-Indian writers was mainly won by treachery and reflects little credit upon those who took part in it. But its results were important. It increased the prestige of the English and improved their position in India by planting their foot firmly in a province which was the richest in Hindustan. The popular imagination was impressed by the victory of the English and although there was no occupation of Bengal by them, it is undeniable that they acquired a great influence in the administration. They did not aim at territorial sovereignty as yet, but they found it possible to maintain on the Masnad of Murshidabad a Nawab who was powerless to uproot their factories. They secured real power and their resources multiplied to such an extent that they could hope to defeat all attempts of Lally and his colleagues to drive them out of South India. The Province of Bengal comprised in those days territories now included in the Provinces of Bengal and Bihar and Orrissa and the dominant influence which the English acquired in the Government opened great possibilities of extending their power northwestwards. It was likely to be the means of pushing into the interior of the country and extending the sphere of their authority beyond the Ganges to the borders of Oudh. As Sir Alfred Lyall rightly says, to advance into Bengal was to penetrate India by its soft and unprotected side.[1] Anyone who acquired it was bound to command the entire Gangetic Delta which has been the chief reservoir of strength to the successive dynasties that have held sway over the Indian Continent.

The battle benefited Clive immensely. It brought him fame and riches. The receipt of the latter was defended by him in words that do little credit to his intelligence or to his sense of public probity When cross-examined by a Select Parliamentary Committee Clive said:

> "Am I not rather deserving of praise for the moderation which marked my proceedings! Consider the situation in which the victory at Plassey had placed me! A

1. Rise of British Dominion in India, p. 139.

great province was dependant on my pleasure; an opulent city lay at my mercy; its richest bankers bid against each other for my smiles; I walked through vaults which were thrown open to me alone; piled on either hand with gold and jewels! Mr. Chairman, at this moment I stand astonished at my own moderation!"

This exaggerated estimate of his own importance is no defence of his questionable methods. Whatever the view that we might take of his conduct, he was regarded by his contemporaries as a great benefactor of his country, and posterity has shown its gratefulness to him by recognizing him as the military founder of the British Empire in India.

Mir Jafar's Government

Mir Jafar was a puppet in the hands of the English. They used him as they liked for their own purposes. Since he had been elevated to the Masnad by the English and the Hindu bankers he was despised by the nobles of his court. In a fit of unguarded generosity he had made lavish promises of money to the Company's servants who now pestered him with their extortionate demands. There was little money in the treasury and the Nawab was unable to meet his liabilities. He had to sell his jewels and assign districts to satisfy his greedy helpers. He had hoped that his presents to Clive and other officers of the Company would lead them to relax their demands on its behalf but he was soon disillusioned when they insisted on a full payment of the sum that he promised. Differences soon arose between the English and the Nawab. The latter wanted to get rid of some of his leading officials like Rai Durlabh, the Dewan and Raja Ram Narayan, the Deputy Governor of Bihar, both of whom were well disposed towards the English. He displayed much harshness in his dealings with the Hindu Zamindars who broke out into rebellion which was suppressed with difficulty. Good government departed from Bengal. The English officers began to care more for their personal interests than for the welfare of the people. They also abused the trade privileges with the result that everywhere there was anarchy and confusion.

Clive was fully aware of the Nawab's weakness and skillfully utilised his opportunity to advance the English interests. He acted as the mediator between the Nawab and his officials and protected the latter against the former's highhandedness. He took up the cause of those who were want only oppressed and by constant interference acquired a great influence over the Nawab. Nothing could be done without his consent and under the stress of this pressure Mir Jafar lost all power of initiative

and independence. The anomaly of Clive's position was seen by the Company when they appointed him in the middle of 1758 Governor of Fort William. He was now much stronger than before, and his new status enabled him effectively to exert his influence on the Nawab who was suspected of carrying on secret correspondence with the French.

Prince Ali Gauhar's invasion

In February 1759 Prince Ali Gauhar better known by his title of Shah Alam invaded Bengal with the help of Shuja-udowlah, the Nawab Vizier of Oudh. The ostensible reason given out by the prince for this move was that he had been given those provinces by the Emperor himself. He attacked Patna with a large army and a number of discontented persons among the Zamindars joined him. Raja Ram Narayan bravely defended himself and drove the prince back. Later British re-inforcements came from Bengal; the prince had to turn back and the Zamindars were reduced to submission.

Clive gets a Jagir

Clive had received the title of Omarah from the Mughal Emperor, through the help of Mir Jafar. But unlike others who enjoyed a similar title, he had no Jagir. A Mughal noble without a Jagir was an incongruity which, Clive thought, must be removed. The hint was taken by Mir Jafar atonce and he granted him a Jagir partly out of fear and partly out of gratefulness for his service in driving away the Mughal Prince. The Jagir consisted of the quit-rent of the 24 Parganas which the Nawab had reserved for himself. This was now to be paid to Clive and amounted to £ 30,000 a year. By accepting the Jagir Clive became atonce the servant and landlord of the Company, a position which even the Directors regarded as 'legal but highly improper'. The company disapproved of the step and expressed the view that he ought not to have accepted the Jagir particularly when he knew that the Nawab was in a state of bankruptcy.

There is no doubt that it was Clive who reduced the Nawab's authority to a shadow and dealt a serious blow to the cause of good government in Bengal. A modern writer comments on Clive's conduct thus:

> "Clive, therefore, by crippling the resources of Mir Jafar at the beginning of his administration, cannot be exonerated from some share of the blame for the notorious misgovernment in Bengal that followed. Full allowances must be made on the score of the

low public morality current at the time in all matters of finance. It was the rule and not the exception for statesmen in the eighteenth century to make large personal profits out of their official positions "[1]

Clive and the Dutch

Mir Jafar had become Nawab with the help of the English but he resented their constant interference. He wanted to shake off their tutelage and entered into correspondence with the Dutch at Chinsurah and asked for their help. Besides, the Dutch too had all this time looked with envious eyes upon the progress of the English, and their trade interests too had suffered to a large extent at the hands of Clive. They wrote to Batavia for help and a fleet of several ships was sent. Since the two nations were at peace in Europe, they could not fight in India but Clive 'took the law into his own hands' and attacked and defeated the Dutch with the help of Forde in November 1759. The Dutch acknowledged themselves to be the aggressors and agreed to make good the English losses. From this time the Dutch confined themselves to trade and did not meddle in politics. Clive's ill-health compelled him to leave for England in February 1760.

Clive's achievements

Clive had fought a great revolution in Bengal. He had virtually turned the English from a body of merchants into the possessors of political power. The Nawab was a mere tool in their hands; the French and the Dutch had their political ambitions frustrated and their strength considerably reduced. The financial resources of the English Company had increased beyond all expectation. Their position in Bengal helped them to maintain their power against their European rivals in the Deccan.

All this was the work of Clive. By his warlike skill, diplomacy and state craft he had succeeded both in Bengal and the Deccan in revolutionising the Company's position. On his capacity for finesse, his craftiness, his greed and his ready and unabashed resort to questionable methods it is no longer necessary to dwell. Enough has been said about them. There is little doubt that he lacked the higher qualities of statesmanship but no one can deny his claim to be called the founder of British dominion in India.

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1. Roberts, History of British India, p. 147.

CHAPTER V

Corruption in Bengal and the Second Governorship of Clive

(1765-67)

Misgovernment

After Clive's departure all the forces of disorder began to work in Bengal and thus followed an era of corruption and misgovernment wholly discreditable to the English. The Company's affairs were managed by incapable and inexperienced men who made confusion worse confounded. Its position was anomalous to a degree; it was *de facto* master of Bengal but it shrank from acting as ruler *de jure*. Its officers enjoyed favour without responsibility and the evils of divided authority soon led to frightful misgovernment. Both the Company and the Nawab were in need of money. The former had to satisfy their masters at home by sending money; the latter was much troubled by the demands of his troops, and needed funds to raise an army to repel the threatened Maratha invasion. The Company's servants of all classes tried to monopolise the interior trade of the three provinces. By combining politics with trade they created much confusion. Sir Alfered Lyall rightly observes.[1]

> "By investing themselves with political attributes without discarding their commercial character, they produced an almsot unprecedented conjunction which engendered intolerable abuse and confusion in Bengal".

Holwell who succeeded Clive was unable to check the malpractices of the Company's officers. The chief desire of the Governor as well as of his colleagues was to grasp all they could and 'to use Mir Jafar as a golden sack into which they could dip their hands at pleasure'. Their salaries being low, they tried to take out their income by taking perquisites and *battas* in one form or another and the Directors connived at their wrongs. Some of the blame for the disorder that became rife in Bengal must rest upon the people in London whose greed blinded them as to the real condition of India.

1. Rise of the British Dominion, p. 143.

Holwell was succeeded after a few months by Vansittart who was a well-meaning man but whose sense of fairness was 'hamstrung by weakness'. The Company had no money; the Directors who had an exaggerated notion of the wealth of Bengal asked their agents to help the Presidency of Madras and Bombay. The Nawab was weak and helpless and his authority was paralysed by the rapacity of the Company's servants. His treasury was empty; his revenue had declined; his liabilities had increased to a considerable extent. He was further troubled by foreign complications. Another invasion of Shah Alam was repulsed by a British force stationed in Bihar but the commander complained that Mir Jafar and his son did not fully co-operate with him. Mir Jafar was old and incompetent, unable to act with firmness and vigour. His son having been killed by a stroke of lightning, an intrigue was set on foot to make his son-in-law Mir Kasim Nawab of Bengal and it was supported by Holwell and others. The Bengal Council compelled the Nawab to abdicate and placed on the Masnad Mir Qasim in his stead. Some members protested against this action on the ground that Mir Jafar was a friend of the English and they were bound to protect his interests. But Holwell and Vansittart had already planned a second revolution and they succeeded in accomplishing it.

Treaty with Mir Qasim, September 27, 1760

A treaty was made with Mir Qasim by which firm friendship was to be established between him and the English, and European soldiers and Telangas[1] were to assist the Nawab in the management of his affairs. The Nawab assigned to the Company the Zamindari rights of revenue of Burdwan, and Midnapur, and Chittagong and *Sanads* were granted for the purpose.[2] The Company was to receive the profits accruing from these lands and was no longer to depend upon the Nawab's uncertain promises. It was further provided that the tenants of the Sarkar (Government) shall not settle in the lands of the English and *vice versa*. Mir Qasim also agreed to pay the debts of his predecessors.

The gains made by the Company's servants were enormous. The members of the Council received for themselves £ 2,00,000

1. Telangas were soldiers from Madras.
2. These new provinces must not be confused with the 24 Parganas already ceded in 1757; the latter were directly administered by the Company, which paid a fixed sum annually as compensation for land revenue; the new provinces were not directly administered, but their Zamindars or revenue collectors paid the revenue to the Company.

and Vansittart the Governor, whose standard of public morality was higher than that of others, received £ 50,000, a considerable addition to the allowance of £ 18,000 a year which he was getting from the Company.

A mere change of Nawabs was no solution of the problem which confronted Bengal. Nothing was done to remove the causes of conflict between the Company and the Nawab. Their interests were bound to clash and lead to trouble in future. This did not matter much to the authors of the new revolution who seem to have taken good care to fix their shares beforehand.

Mir Qasim strengthens himself

Hastings looked upon him as 'a man of understanding', of an uncommon talent for business, and great application and perseverance, joined to a thriftiness which how little so ever it might ennoble his own character was a quality most essentially necessary in a man who had to restore an impoverished state, and clear off debts which had been accumulating for three years before. He was anxious to establish order in Bengal and remove the abuses from the Government. One of his earliest acts was to remove Ram Narayan, the Governor of Patna, whom Clive had retained in spite of the repeated requests of Mir Jafar to maintain the balance of power. Ram Narayan's chief fault was that he did not pay the revenue to the Nawab and was guilty of insubordination. Knowing the Nawab's intentions, he won over Sir Eyre Coote, the victor of Wandiwash and with his help defied the Nawab's authority. The Nawab reported the matter to Vansittart and the latter disapproved of Coote's interference in the Nawab's affairs and recalled him from Behar. Mir Qasim was now left free to deal with Ram Narayan. His accounts were examined and when they were found unsatisfactory, his property was confiscated and he was taken in custody. His offer to pay all the arrears was rejected by the Nawab. The punishment meted out to the victim of Mir Qasim's vindictive fury was much too severe and no words are too strong to condemn the weakness of the Governor who betrayed a man whom the English had repeatedly pledged to protect.

Mir Qasim then turned to internal order. He tried to put down the Bhojpuri Zamindars who created disturbance in the country and some of whom committed dacoity without fear of punishment. Several forts belonging to these Zamindars were taken and they were chased out of their districts. The property of those who fled away was confiscated and tahsildars were appointed in the various parganas to look after the administration. The Nawab adopted a ruthless policy in punishing all those

who resisted his authority and sided the rebels. Hundreds of spies were employed to trace out the culprits many of whom were sentenced to death after 'mock trials'. He organized his troops also and employed foreign soldiers of whom ten are worthy of mention. One was Grenory, an Armenian and Samru, a German adventurer who was responsible for many shady transactions.

Thus by a policy of terror, the Nawab had fully established his authority. The author of the Sair-ul-Mutakharin writes:

> "There was no man in his court, however considerable, who dares speak a wrong word, or who, lives near or far, could sleep in his bed easy and in peace of mind."

The frontiers were not neglected. He inspected the famous forts personally and appointed his own officers to look after them. Samru was posted at Buxar with a large force with which he made short work of six hundred Bhojpuria robbers, an act which afterwards encouraged him to perpetrate the massacre of Patna.

Behar was now fully in the grip of Mir Qasim. He had put down the elements of lawlessness and showed a wonderful energy in settling the administration. He transferred the capital from Murshidabad to Monghyr, away from British influence. It was clear that he was determined to act like a strong man, come what might. A collision with the English was only a question of time.

The Nawab's quarrel with the English

There were many points of dispute between the Nawab and the English and they assumed a serious shape when Ellis was placed in charge of the factory at Patna. Hastings promised to support the Nawab against Ellis but this personal quarrel was not so important as the larger question of the regulation of the inland trade. The Nawab wanted to put the latter on a satisfactory basis. Under the *firmans* of Farrukh Siyer, the Company had been permitted to carry on its export trade free of duty. After 1756 its servants claimed the privilege on their private trade which they carried on in the province. They wanted to trade freely in such articles as salt, betel and tobacco. After the Battle of Plassey, there was no clause about such exemption in the treaty but a Sanad was granted by Mir Jafar allowing the English to engage themselves in trade of any kind. Surely this did not mean exemption from transit duties on inland trade. The result was that the Nawab found himself

between two fires. On the one hand the Company demanded heavy sums from him which he could not afford to pay, on the other Company's servants by claiming an unauthorised exemption created confusion, defrauded him of his revenue and did incalculable injury to his subjects. The Indian agents (*gumashtas*) of the English traders used the Company's *dastaks* (permits) fraudulently to escape from transit duties and did a considerable harm to the Indian merchants and *ryots*. Sometimes only English flags were used to show that the goods belonged to the Company's servants. The *dastaks* were openly bought and sold by Indian merchants which meant the right of buying and selling the right of free trade in the name of the Company's servants. Hastings who was a member of the Council, was right in saying that the privileges claimed by the Company and allowed by the Government, were originally designed by both for goods brought into the country or purchased in it for exportation and that the possession of power could not create a right which had never been conceded. Surely as some modern writers say no Indian ruler would, or could have granted foreigners love to wreck his whole system by a monopoly of duty-free trade along every road and river of his kingdom. That the evil was serious is clear from what Hastings wrote to Vansittart:

> "Were I to suppose myself in the place of the Nawab I should not be at a loss in what manner to protect my own subjects or servants from insults; but whilst the principle prevails, that no point (however little beneficial to ourselves) is to be given up to the Nawab, and that to authority of our own, I should hardly venture to propose to any other besides yourself to restrain the power of our *Gomastas* to the immediate concerns of the Company, to which we ourselves are limited by the *firman*, and our treaty with the Nawab."[1]

Mir Qasim complained of these matters to the Council at Calcutta but the only persons who supported him were Vansittart and Hastings and they were outvoted. The majority of the Council defended their action on these grounds.

Firstly, that they had received these privileges from the Emperor in 1717 and cited the *firman* as their authority; secondly, that the treaties with Sirajudowlah and Mir Jafar had ratified these privileges, thirdly, that they had enjoyed the privileges for four years.

1. Gleig's Life of Hastings I, p. 107.

These flimsy grounds did not satisfy the Nawab and the confusion continued to increase. His officers obstructed the trade of the English, and the agents of the latter denied the Nawab's authority and robbed his subjects. When Vansittart tried to compare the differences in an amicable manner, his motive was impugned and he was charged with the betrayal of English interests. The greed of the members of the Council overbore their bitter judgment and they decided in future a duty of £ 2 per cent. should be levied against the silk trade and that the Nawab should have no control over the English agents. This was clearly a highhanded act and drove the Nawab into despair and they turned a deaf ear to the Nawab's protest. Having failed to get justice at the hands of the Council in great wrath the Nawab abolished all duties whatsoever. This was regarded as highly detrimental to the Company's interests and it was agreed that he as Subahdar of Bengal had no right to take such a step without the permission from the Mughal Emperor. The Council charged the Nawab with breach of treaty and threatened him with war. In the meantime Ellis, who was a man of hasty and violent temper, attacked the city of Patna and captured it (June 1763). But the Nawab's forces soon dislodged the English, recovered the town and made 200 European prisoners.

What were Mir Qasim's real intentions? From the beginning he had longed to free himself from the control of the English and was not satisfied with the position in which the Government of Bengal had been placed by his father-in-law. The question of inland trade hastened the hour of reckoning. Arguments and protests had availed naught and he felt that a war alone could indicate his power and position. He began to organize his resources for the coming struggle. He practised severe economy in his house-hold, abolished superfluous posts and dismissed every English officer in his service. He collected an army of his own and opened connections with the Nawab Vizir of Oudh. He increased his ammunition, cast new guns and prepared for war.

The Council on coming to know of these developments declared hostilities against him and deposed him from the Nawabship and proclaimed Mir Jafar again Nawab in his stead.[1] Mir Qasim had at his command an army of 20,000 men and justifiably felt eager to try conclusions with the English. He

1. Mir Jafar was again saddled with heavy liabilities. He promised to pay to the Company £3,060, to members of Council £5,30,000 and to the army and the navy £2,50,000. He was in a state of deep distress and anxiety and waited for Clive but died before his arrival.

captured Qasim Bazar but soon after the British troops marched from Calcutta and in two battles at Coheria and Udayanala overpowered the Nawab's army. In despair he put to death his Armenian Commander-in-Chief Courgin Khan and ordered all the European prisoners in Patna to be massacred by Samru, an infamous soldier in his service.

Mir Qasim who was now a rebel against the Government of Bengal was in a difficult position. His cruel treatment had alienated from him his leading officers. He had confiscated their property and thrown them into prison on the slightest pretexts.

During three years many people had suffered seriously at his hands Ram Narayan, Rajballabha and some others were drowned into the Ganges with bags of sand tiedto their necks and the Seths were executed by Samru. The Nawab had made himself thoroughly unpopular; there was no sympathy for him anywhere. His only support was the mercenary army and when this was dispensed with his ruin became inevitable.

In despair Mir Qasim fled to Oudh to seek the help of the Nawab Vizier. The latter welcomed the fugitive for selfish reasons and promised support. The combined forces of Shah Alam, Shujaudowlah and Mir Qasim had advanced upon Patna which was occupied by the English. They pushed into Behar and fought several indecisive engagements. There was a mutiny in the British army which was quickly suppressed by Major Munro who brought the deserters to book and inflicted a crushing defeat upon the enemy at Buxar (October 1764). This was the biggest battle the English had fought so far. They lost 847 men while the enemy had 2,000 killed and thousands drowned in the river. The Nawab Vizier's territory was invaded next and the British troops met with no resistance. Allahabad and Chunar easily fell into their hands.

The Vizier had badly treated Mir Qasim. He was more anxious to get his wealth than to save him from the English. It is said he was tortured by the Vizier's orders and made to sit in a kettle full of boiling water and pressed to disgorge his jewels and treasure.[1] Mir Qasim was said to have exclaimed in anguish 'what does the Nawab Vizier want from me now. He has seized whatever I possessed. If his object is to kill me, I am ready in the name of God If he likes to spare my life, he may, so that I may go wherever I like.'

Just before the battle, he was allowed to go. It is said the Nawab escaped on a lame elephant planning coalition against the English which never came into being.

1. Imad-us-Saadat, p. 93.

Result of the battle of Buxar. The Battle of Buxar is in a way more important than the Battle of Plassey. The Company ceased to be a mere trading body and became the most formidable commercial republic known in the world since the demolition of Carthage.[1] It was a battle which was fought on both sides with energy and vigour and decided important issues. It was not merely the Nawab of Bengal but the Emperor and his Vizier who were beaten. Their prestige received a severe blow and the country was impressed by the superiority of the British arms. Sir Alfred Lyall sums up the results of the battle in these words[2] :

> "The success of the English brought the Emperor into their camp, intimidated the Vizier, carried the armed forces of the Company across the Ganges to Benares and Allahabad and acquired for them a new, advanced and commanding position in relation to the principalities north-west of Bengal, with whom now they found themselves for the first time in contact. By this war the English were brought out upon a scene of fresh operations that grew rapidly wider."

By this time northern India had passed through great changes. The Afghans had engaged the Marathas in Battle at Panipat in 1761 and completely defeated them. While the Afghan guns thundered at the historic field of Panipat, the English were rapidly advancing towards political supremacy in Bengal and the Battle of Buxar raised them to a position which they had not possessed before.

Mir Jafar died in February 1765 and the Bengal Council raised to the Masnad his second son who was a mere puppet in the hands of the Company. The real power was vested in the Nawab's Naib (Deputy) Muhammad Raza Khan who was appointed at the suggestion of the English. The Company wrung a number of concessions from the new Nawab and received valuable presents from him as they had done before. The Governor and his colleagues alone received £ 1,39,357. There was general corruption and the Company's servants, high and low were all bent upon making their fortunes.

Clive returns to India, May 1765

It was at this time that Clive returned to India as Governor of Bengal for the second time. His wealth which he had carried from India had enabled him to obtain an Irish Peerage and a

1. Charles Caraccioli, Life of Clive I, p. 106.
2. Rise of British Dominion in India, pp-147-48.

seat in Parliament. He had acquired some influence at the India House also but the Directors were not in agreement with his views. When the news of the corruption and disorder in Bengal reached England, Clive was asked to go out to India in order to set matters right. His experience of Indian affairs and his distinguished services entitled him to be entrusted with such an important task He was appointed Governor and the duties of the head of the British army were also assigned to him. His Jagir was allowed to him for ten years or till his death, if he died before the expiry of that period. He was to work with a Council but if this was not possible, he was authorised to form a Select Committee of four with himself as President to discuss and decide the matters that came up before the Government.

On coming to India Clive found that in their external relations the Company had been successful in humbling the Mughal Emperor as well as the Nawab Vizier of Oudh. They had both been defeated in battle and made to feel the superiority of British arms. But the internal affairs of the Company were in a deplorable condition. Much has been said about the greed and corruption of the servants of the Company. They had violated not merely the rules and regulations laid down by their masters but all canons of decency which govern the conduct of men in a civilized state. They had made and re-made Nawabs in Bengal and at the time of each succession they had heartily mulcted their protege. Their policy of war had brought them some advantage but it had also increased their risks and responsibilities. It was clearly disapproved by the Directors who were more anxious for trade than for political power. Things were in such a deplorable state when Clive assumed the governorship of Bengal. What was needed was a clear definition of the Company's policy and drastic reform.

CLIVE'S SECOND GOVERNORSHIP OF BENGAL

The New Nawab

Mir Jafar had died in February last and the Council had recognized his son Najibudowlah as his successor, on the condition that he will agree to have a representative of the Company to look after the administration. Obviously the intention was to reduce the Nawab's authority to a nullity. Nand Kumar was removed and Muhammad Raza Khan was appointed Naib as the Company's nominee to carry on the government. The usual gifts were exacted by the members of the Council who cared nothing for the instructions which had been issued from time to time by the Court of Directors.

Foreign relations of the Company

On his arrival in India Clive found that the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam and the Nawab Vizier of Oudh were suppliants for the favour of the Company. They had been defeated in battle recently and their prestige had received a severe blow. The whole of Oudh was well within the grasp of the Company but Clive decided to confine them to Bengal, Behar and Orissa. He shrank from assuming the direct control of Oudh which the English could have taken by right of conquest but Clive decided to reinstate the Nawab Vizier in his kingdom and restored his territories to him on the ground that it was not sound policy to increase the territories under the rule of the Company. Consequently he went to Allahabad and entered into a treaty with the Nawab Vizier and the Emperor in August 1765. By this treaty an offensive and defensive alliance was concluded with the Nawab and the English agreed to supply him with troops on payment of money whenever he felt the need for them. The Nawab was to pay a war indemnity of 50 lakhs of rupees to the Company and he was to make over the districts of Kara and Allahabad to the Emperor. The Zamindari of Benares was guaranteed to the ruling family but the Raja was to be a feudatory of Oudh. The Nawab was further asked to promise that he would give no trouble to Mir Qasim and Samru.

Clive entered into a treaty with the Emperor also. The latter was a fugitive and possessed nothing more than his title. As has been said before, the districts of Allahabad and Kara were given to him and he was guaranteed a pension of 26 lakhs a year by the Company, from the revenue of Bengal, Behar and Orissa. In return the Emperor granted to the Company the Dewani of Bengal, i. e. the right of collecting the revenue.

The acquisition of the Dewani by the English made a great change in their status. The Dewan's function was to collect the revenue and to exercise a certain amount of civil jurisdiction which implied responsibility for good government. But Clive was not ready for such a step and, therefore, the direct collection of the revenues and the civil jurisdiction were entrusted to two Indian officers Muhammad Raza Khan for Bengal and Raja Shitab Rai for Behar both acting as Naib Dewans. Their headquarters were at Murshidabad and Patna respectively. While the Dewani was thus assigned the *Nizamat*, i. e., the control of military and criminal justice was left in the hands of the Nawab, who was to be given a fixed sum for carrying out these duties. The real military authority was in the hands of the Company and even in the matter of administration the Nawab was powerless. The Company possessed the power of the sword as well as the purse.

As the Nawab was a minor, a *Naib Nazim* or deputy was also appointed to assist him and he was to be a nominee of the Company. His position was dubious; he was to work with the Nawab but he was appointed by the Company and was responsible to it. The office was held by Muhammad Raza Khan until 1772.

The Dewani marks the beginning of the territorial sovereignty of the English. Clive saw clearly that the time had come when this idea of ruling without responsibility must be discarded. He wrote from Madras, 'we must become Nabobs in fact, if not in name, perhaps totally so, without disguise'. The Company's servants were to collect the revenue and the Nawab was to be paid 53 lakhs of rupees a year. Thus Clive gave the Company a stable or legitimate position. So far the English had acted only as intriguers and wire-pullers; now they had to take charge of the machinery of government and it was their duty to see that this responsibility was properly carried out. The Emperor was a puppet but his name still carried much prestige with it. The Indian princes still bowed to his authority and sought his *firman* to confirm their title and position. The Europeans in Bengal could not easily challenge the position of a foreigner confirmed by an imperial *firman*.

It is impossible to question the wisdom of Clive's arrangements. He put a limit to the ambitions of the Company and defined its policy in clear terms. He said :

> "My resolution, however, was and my hopes will be, to confine our assistance, our conquest and our possessions to Bengal, Behar and Orissa. To go further is in my opinion a scheme so extravagantly ambitious and absurd, that no Governor and Council in their senses can adopt it, unless the whole system of the Company's interest be first entirely new and remodelled."

It was for this reason that he disapproved of conquest and strengthened Oudh as a friendly State between Bengal and Hindustan proper. There were some contemporary critics who pointed out the futility of coming to terms with a titular sovereign and advised a move towards Delhi, but such a step would have aroused the jealousy of the Indian powers, the Marathas, Muslims and Rajputs. A European writer observed in 1770 that there was in India the possibility of immense regions being reduced by a handful of regular troops and that the troops in the Company's service were sufficient not only to conquer all India but, with proper policy, to maintain it for ages as an appendage to the British Crown. Clive's view was different and therefore he refrained from the Delhi move which was likely to prove dangerous. His action produced the following results :

The Dewani formally recognized the English position in Bengal, although it did not clearly define it. The administration was conducted by Indians under the Company's control and this made improvement difficult.

The Emperor now resided at Allahabad where he was in close touch with the English and became their puppet. They could easily obtain any kind of *firman* from him.

The Nawab Vizier became practically a dependent of the Company. He was an ally of the British, and Oudh acted as a buffer State against the Marathas who were rapidly advancing in Northern India.

The arrangement brought abundant wealth to the Company. The income from the revenues of Bengal, Behar and Orissa was estimated at £ 30,00,000 per annum. There were some in England like Pitt who suggested that the Crown should take up the government which the Company had assumed in Bengal but this view was not shared by many.

Such was Clive's Dual System. Its one great advantage was that it gave the English control over the Nawab which was much needed at the time, and it also 'promised some protection against the complaints of the foreign powers and the demands of the home government'.

Clive now turned his attention to the reform of the Company's civil service. He spoke of it as the Augean stable which must be cleaned by drastic methods. Calcutta was to him now 'One of the most wicked places in the Universe, Corruption, Licentiousness and a want of Principle seem to have possessed the minds of all the Civil Servants, by frequent bad Examples they have grown callous, Rapacious and Luxurious beyond Conception, and the Incapacity and Iniquity of some and the Youth of others. The capital letters show the intensity of Clive's feeling. He was struck by the scene' which, he thought, was 'shocking to human nature' and he dwelt with indignation upon 'the unreasonable desire of many to acquire in an Instant, what only a few can, or ought to possess.' He condemned their rapacity and 'luxury' and said :

> 'Alas, how is the English name sunk! I could not avoid paying the tribute of a few tears to the departed and lost fame of the British nation.'

The first thing he did was to force the Company's servants to enter into covenants by which they were forbidden to accept

1. Cambridge History of India VI, p. 176.

presents and to engage in private trade the two evils in the Company's establishment which cried for redress. He tried to carry out his reforms with the help of the Select Committee which fully supported him in enforcing his orders. There was much opposition from the Bengal civilians who reminded him of his own corruption and attributed his zeal for reform to his anxiety about himself. All kinds of charges were levelled against him but he remained firm. He made a new rule that appoinments in the Bengal service were not the monopoly of Bengal officials, and to certain vacancies he appointed men from Madras. He was in favour of increasing the salaries of the Company's servants but he could not persuade the Directors to accept his proposal. With a view to enabling them to eke out their income, he granted a monopoly of the salt trade to the superior servants of the Company in graduated shares. The Governor was to receive £ 17,500 per annum, a colonel in the army or a member of Council £ 7,000, and the officers in the lower grades smaller amounts according to their rank. The Directors did not agree to this plan and afterwards strongly censured Clive for it. Two years after the system adopted by him was abolished by the Directors and they replaced it by commissions on the revenues of the Province which added to the Governor's salary an additional income of about £ 18,000 a year. The incomes of lesser officers were increased in similar proportion. The reforms of Clive in the Civil Service of the Company may be thus summed up—abolition of private trade, except in salt, tobacco, opium and betel leaf and the total prohibition of members of Council from acting as agents in the *Muffasil*.

Clive's 'Society of trade' for the benefit of Civil Servants was abolished in 1768 by the Directors and he was censured for it.

Clive's military reforms deserve to be noticed. The military establishment of Bengal consisted of the Company's troops and the Nawab's troops were not allowed by treaty to increase beyond 12,000 cavalry and 12,000 infantry. The Company's troops consisted of Sepoys (18,000) and 2,500 European foot soldiers. Thus the defence of Bengal depended upon these two. To strengthen it further the policy of unification was adopted. Clive's reforms were directed towards reducing the Nawab's troops and increasing those of the Company. The Nawab could not resist Clive's will and had to agree.

The more odious task was to reduce the double *bhatta* which the Company's troops had been getting since the days of Mir Jafar. This was given only when the troops were on active service. Mir Qasim had continued the practice and had assigned

to the Company certain districts from the income of which this allowance was paid. When the burden of payment fell upon the Company, Directors asked Clive to reduce it to single *bhatta.* The military officers resented the charge and many of them (nearly 200) resigned in a single day and combined to resist the reform. This happened at Monghyr and Patna but Clive cooly faced the situation. He accepted the resignations of officers and brought fresh men from Madras in their places. He continued his method of persuasion and threats and put down the mutiny in a fortnight. He won the goodwill of common soldiers by adding a little to their income and attached them to himself. The army was organized and steps were taken to create a fund out of which help was given to disabled officers and the dependants of those had died in active service.

Clive left India in February 1767. Anglo-Indian historians have bestowed high praise upon him for his great qualities. He had insight into politics and a rare capacity for compelling obedience of his subordinates. He was a born leader of men and never lost his head even in the midst of the greatest danger. His chief strength lay in the possession of a firm will and clearness of vision which we do not find among other officers of the Company. In times of crisis he shone brilliantly—and steadily put down those who opposed him or thwarted his plans. He showed great valour on several occasions and won fame as a military leader of undoubted talents. His practical sagacity, his statesmanship and devotion to the interests of his country manifested themselves in the Councils of the Company. He had a rare grasp of administrative problems and approached them with a high sense of duty which took no account of risks and which spurned all opposition. While all this is true, it cannot be denied that he suffered from the bluntness of the moral sense. He had done many questionable things in Bengal for which others were severely condemned. He had gone so far as to commit forgery although his motive was to advance the interests of the Company. Some of his acts were wholly indefensible; they did not commend themselves even to his contemporaries. While it is not possible to agree with Malleson who sees nothing but honour and integrity in Clive's character, we cannot endorse Mill's judgment that Clive was a man 'to whom deception, when it suited his purpose, never cost a pang'. When we think of his heroism and his audacity in political crises, his courage in dealing with his rebellious subordinates and the intense feeling with which he tackled the question of reforms we cannot resist Macaulay's verdict that he was a man truly great either in arms or in Council'. He did much for his country and his services will always be remembered with gratitude by his countrymen.

Clive had made many enemies by his drastic reforms. Jealousy, spite and hatred all combined to do him harm. The fatal influence of the riches brought from India was freely commented upon and the retired servants of the Company came to be known as 'Nabobs'. A Select Committee was appointed to examine him on his Indian policy and his earlier acts were strongly criticised. In May 1773 Colonel Burgoyne moved three resolutions which contained a denunciation of Clive's conduct in Bengal and charged him with abusing his authority and spoiling the fair name of his nation. Clive defended himself with vigour and after a protracted debate the House passed a resolution 'that Robert Clive at the same time rendered great and meritorious services to his country'.

Though Clive's services were appreciated, his spirit was mortified by the humiliation he had suffered. The thought that his fair name was tarnished painfully stung him and filled him with grief. Already in the grip of a serious disease, he died by his own hand in a moment of great distress on November 2, 1774. He was at the time of his death 50 years of age.

CHAPTER VI

Misgovernment in Bengal (1767-72)

Verelst (1767-69); Cartier (1769-72)

After Clive's departure there was complete confusion in Bengal. The dual government had produced disastrous results. In every country, more particularly in India, it is absolutely necessary that the executive government must be one and indivisible so that the various parts of the governmental machinery may function properly but this was not so in Bengal. Authority was divided between the Nawab and the Company. There was no discipline and little regard for the public weal. The Nawab held the Nizamat, i. e. the magistracy, the police and criminal justice, while the Company possessed the power of the purse. Conflict in such circumstances was inevitable, for there was no common superior, armed with full power to decide their disputes. The Nawab's power was limited, his decrees were frequently disobeyed and his officers were treated with scant regard by the Company's servants. He was actually a stipendiary servant of the Company and the Dewani was a mere fiction invented for the benefit of the Company and its servants. The latter supported the Zamindari in oppressing the people. The condition of the people became worse than before. In Alivardi Khan's time the revenue paid into the treasury was less, but the Zamindars, Sarrafs and merchants were rich and gave money to the Nawab whenever he needed it.

The *Malguzari* was settled with the Zamindars on moderate terms. They had an interest in their districts and by proper management tried to advance the interests of the *ryot*. If the rents did not come in time, they borrowed money from the Sarrafs to pay their revenue. Even the *ryots* could get money from them to improve their cultivation and the country flourished in spite of the despotic government. But the conditions had now changed. The English under the Dewani tried to get as much revenue as possible to make remittances home and to meet the expenses of the administration in the country. The Amils were sent into the country and paid the fixed sum that was settled with them. This was a disastrous system. They had no natural interest in the welfare of the people as they were appointed annually; they tried to collect the stipulated sum by all

measures. The *ryot* was rack-rented and oppressed so as to enable the Amils to make their payment. Besides, they enjoyed absolute power; there was none to check or supervise their work. The *ryot's* condition is thus described in a contemporary record :

> "There is no likelihood of complaints till the poor *ryot* is really driven to the necessity by having more demanded by him than he can possibly pay. Much these poor wretches will bear rather than quit their habitations to come here to complain, especially when it is to be considered that it must always be attended with loss of time, risk of obtaining redress, and certainty of being very ill used should the Amil's influence be sufficient payment for the poor Man's obtaining justice or even access to those able to grant it to him."[1]

The farming system was entirely unsatisfactory and resulted in much suffering to the cultivators. In 1769 supervisors of revenue were appointed who were subordinate to the Resident. The instructions issued to them breathed a spirit of sympathy for the poor, but they were more honoured in the breach than in the observance, and the supervisors too became exacting and oppressive.

Equally bad was the condition of trade under the dual system. The inland trade of the country had led to great evils, the effects of which were felt by the weavers and manufacturers of Bengal. The *Banias* and *goomashtas* of the English freely oppressed the people; they fined, imprisoned and flogged the weavers with the result that their number was considerably reduced. The prices of their goods were fixed by the *goomashtas* who often put them 15 per cent. and sometimes even 40 per cent: lower than the market rate.

All this roguery was practiced unchecked by the Company's agents who prosecuted a weaver when he tried to sell his goods to French or Dutch *goomashtas* at the proper price. Neither Reza Khan nor his officials could check their extortions. Verelst who was Governor at this time drew up a memorandum in which he pointed out the abuses of the system to the Directors. There was no public spirit among the Company's servants; they cared only for loaves and fishes and tried to get rich as quickly as possible.

> "Hence the dominions in Asia, like the distant Roman provinces, during the decline of the empire, have been

1. Secret Com. Cons. India Office Records, Range A 9 Ramsay Muir, Making of British India, p. 94.

abandoned, as lawful prey, to every species of peculation; in so much that many of the servants of the Company after exhibition of such scenes of barbarity as can scarcely be paralleled in the history of any country, have returned to England loaded with wealth; where in trenching themselves on borough or East India stock influence, they have set justice at defiance or and assumed a look of oppressed innocence."[1]

The need for changing the system was strongly emphasised:

"The different interests of the Company, as sovereigns of Bengal and at the same time as monopolizers of all the trade and commerce of those countries, operate in direct opposition, and are mutually destructive of each other; so that without a new system the progress must be from bad to worse. The Company, if left to pursue its present system will ruin itself; the possessions in Bengal will be beggared, and the kingdom deprived of the advantages of those possessions which might be the means of greatly relieving the circumstances of the nations, and of raising it to a state of prosperity and power almost beyond example."

Bengal was denuded of its wealth. Bullion was exported to China and other countries and the total amount drained out of the country was estimated at five million sterling. The coins became scarce and trade suffered seriously.

The Famine of 1770. Verelst was succeeded by Cartier (1769-71) who was confronted with the same evils as his predecessor. His difficulties were greatly increased by the dreadful famine which occurred in Bengal and swept away nearly one-third of the population of the province. Not a drop of rain fell for six months in most of the districts and food and fodder became impossible to obtain. More than fifty persons died of hunger daily in the streets of Patna and misery of the lower classes of the population beggared all description. In the wake of famine came pestilence and smallpox and other ravages took a dreadful toll of human life in many of the great cities and villages. The streets of Murshidabad were strewn with corpses and in the countryside men and cattle perished in large numbers.

Muhammad Reza Khan wrote in 1770:

"The tanks and springs are dried up, and water grows daily more difficult to be procured. Added to these calamities, frequent and dreadful fires have happened

1. William Boats, Consideration on Indian Affairs

> throughout the country, impoverished whole families and destroyed thousands of lives...........I know not what the divine will has ordained shall befall this country. The calamity is past the ingenuity of man. The Almighty alone can deliver us from such distress."

Such was the condition of Bengal in 1770 but the English and Indian officials continued to make money for themselves. Corruption flourished unchecked and the *ryot* and the Zamindar were crushed alike under the weight of heavy private and public demand. The Company's supremacy had proved a curse to the people. The abuse of trade had ruined the silk industry of Bengal. The Governor was unable to do anything. The task was beyond his capacity. The Company was on the verge of bankruptey and it was its financial collapse which compelled the attention of the Directors towards its affairs. They appointed Warren Hastings, one of the Madras officials as Governor of Bengal in 1772. With his advent began a new year in the history of the Government of Bengal, and the affairs of the East India Company.

External Relation

The friendship with the Nawab Vizier of Oudh and the possession of the Emperor's person had strengthened the position of the English. The Marathas had rapidly recovered from the shock of Panipat. The Bhonsala had raided Orissa and demanded Chauth from the English. The Peshwa wanted to establish Maratha power by restoring the Mughal Emperor to his throne and rule in his name. In 1771 Mahadji Sindhia was deputed to escort the Emperor to Delhi. The latter readily agreed and left Allahabad where he had been staying since the treaty which he had made with Clive in 1765.

CHAPTER VII

Wars in South India—Haider Ali of Mysore

The Carnatic

The defeat of the French in 1760 and the capture of Pondichery had established the power of the English in the Carnatic and placed upon the throne Muhammad Ali who was a puppet in their hands. There were few princes in South India so weak and timid as Muhammad Ali. His army was disorganized and his finances were in a wretched condition. He was heavily indebted and was not in a position to pay off his debts. The administration was in a state of disorder and his own officers were disloyal, greedy and rebellious. Loans were raised by the Government at Madras at usurious rates of interest and the English creditors of the Nawab pestered him with their demands and exercised an unhealthy influence over the Madras Council. As the English had spent a great deal of money in placing him upon the throne of the Carnatic, the Government of Madras demanded 50 lakhs from the Nawab but he had no money to meet his obligations. He suggested to the English the spoliation of the Raja of Tanjore, one of his feudatories and 24 lakhs were extorted from the unfortunate ruler in four instalments. In 1763 the Peace of Paris was made and the possessions of the French were restored to them on the condition that Muhammad Ali will be recognized by both parties as Nawab of the Carnatic and Salabat Jang as Nizam of Haiderabad. But the latter had been killed several months before by his brother Nizam Ali, who brought about his murder, on hearing that his right to the Nizamat had been recognized by the English and the French.

Muhammad Ali continued to rule the Carnatic and although he had transferred neither the Dewani nor the Nizamat to the English, he was a nonentity and they had all real power in their hands. He assigned to them several districts in lieu of the heavy debts he had incurred but they shrank from taking over the direct administration of his territories.

The Northern Sirkars

It will be recalled that the Northern Sirkars had been secured by the French and had furnished the sinews of war to

Bussy who had resided there for several years. They were wrested from the French by Colonel Forde in 1759 but they remained in an unsettled condition. In 1765 by the Treaty of Allahabad Clive obtained them for the English from the Mughal Emperor. Salabat Jang had been murdered by this time and the new Nizam strongly disapproved of the transaction. He despatched his army to destroy the English contingent that was sent to occupy them. The Madras Council, weak in its personnel, at this time, and guided by a man not particularly bold and courageous entered into negotiations with the Nizam and concluded a treaty by which the Company was to hold the Sirkars but only as a tributary of the Nizam. They were to pay seven lakhs of rupees a year. The Sirkar of Guntur was excluded from the treaty and Basalat Jang, one of the brothers of the Nizam was allowed to retain it as his *jagir*. Further, the Madras Government agreed to supply the Nizam with two battalions of infantry and six field pieces, which he intended to employ against Haider Ali of Mysore.

Rise of Haider Ali

The rise of Haider Ali from a soldier to the ruler of a kingdom is one of the most interesting facts of modern history. Mysore was originally a province of the Hindu empire of Vijanagar. When the latter broke up in 1565, it became independent under a Hindu dynasty called Wodeyar about 1650. In 1704 Aurangzeb recognized the family of Wodeyar and it appears that the rulers of Mysore efficiently administered their territories until the middle of the 18th century when they lost their power and became the territories of the Nizam who was in his turn a vassal of the Mughal Empire. The Marathas carried their inroads into the country and demanded opportunity for a political or military adventurer to establish his influence in the kingdom of Mysore.

Such an adventurer was Haider Ali, the famous Musalman warrior and inveterate foe of the English who rose to power in the 18th century by sheer dint of merit. Biographers have assigned to him a lofty pedigree; they have based his descent from the Lodis, the Adil Shahs of Bijapur and kings of Persia. But there is little evidence to support either view. There is no doubt that he came from a foreign Mohammedan family which had migrated to the south from its original home he was born in 1722. His father was an officer in the Mysore army and so was his brother. The State of Mysore was under the influence of two capable men—Devaraj, the Delawai (Chief Army Officer) and Nanraj, the minister. Haider's intrepidity and courage attracted the attention of the latter who allowed him to keep a

small force and entrusted him in 1789 with the charge of the fortress of Devanhalli which was on the frontier of the kingdom. Haider discharged his duties well, and the frequent attacks of the Marathas and the Nizam, gave him an opportunity of increasing his power. He took part in the Anglo-French war with the minister and was greatly impressed by the discipline of the European troops. In 1755 he became the faujdar of Dindigal where he organized a large army in which he employed Europeans and stored ammunition for his encounter with the Maratha. Soon after, he entered Serangapatam and received from the helpless Raja the title Fateh-Haider Bahadur. Nanraj was got rid of, and he himself became regent. His help was sought by the French but his own troubles and anxieties prevented him from complying with their request. He was himself in trouble for two years but regained his lost influence in 1763 and dealt drastically with his enemies. Khande Rao, the Brahman minister, who had acquired great power was shut in an iron cage like an 'inauspicious crow' and sent off to Bangalore. He occupied himself in restoring the fortunes of the State of Mysore, in putting down sedition and crime, and in removing dishonest and incompetent civil servants. He collected troops, improved the administration of justice, and by his kindness won the hearts of all. Having done this, he embarked upon a career of conquest and in 1763 captured Bednore, now a small village in the western part of the Mysore State. He celebrated this conquest with great magnificance for fifteen days; festivities were held on a lavish scale and plenty of money was distributed among the poor, the religious and the musicians. The brave soldiers with whose help the conquest had been accomplished were not ignored and were given a share in the booty seized by them. To the town of Bednore was given the name of Haidernagar and it was entrusted to one of his own servants. In Kanara Haider took advantage of a disputed succession and annexed it to Mysore. Malawar, Baramahal, Coimbatore, and other districts followed suit and it was the fear of the Marathas that interrupted his career of conquest. He now assumed the title of Haider Ali Khan Bahadur and practically became the ruler of Mysore, the Raja being relegated to the background.

The First Mysore War 1767-1769

The rise of Haider Ali filled the Marathas with fear and alarm particularly because he had at this time at his beck and call an army consisting of 20,000 horse and 40,000 foot. Haider was defeated and next year the Marathas came again and inflicted a fresh defeat upon their enemy who suffered a loss of 10,000 men. He escaped from this dangerous situation by

promising to return all the territories he had taken and to pay an indemnity of 32 lakhs of rupees. To recompense himself for these losses he returned to Malabar where the defeated the Nairs, and planted his flag on the wall of Calicut. But he was soon called backto defend his own country against the combined attack of the Nizam and the Marathas. The English had also offered to help the Nizam for they were bound to do so by the treaty of 1766. Colonel Smith was sent with an army to help him and the Marathas were the first to appear in the field. Haider was frightened and he bribed them to retire.

Colonel Smith now found that the Nizam was also negotiating with Haider and contemplating a joint attack on the British force. He was made to withdraw by a payment of twenty lakhs of rupees and a promise of six lakhs as yearly tribute. The Nizam, the Marathas, and Haider had now a large army at their disposal which was numerically far superior to the British force under Colonel Smith. Yet the latter twice defeated the combined army and captured sixty-four field pieces. Haider's son Tippu advanced against Madras and plundered the country. In the meantime an expeditionary force was sent into the Nizam's territories, and on hearing the news, he diserted Haider and hastened to save his capital.

According to English writers the Nizam was guilty of 'monstrous perfidy' and he ought to have been completely humbled. But the terms of the treaty made with him were highly derogatory to the honour and prestige of the Company. The Company agreed to pay tribute for the Northern Sirkars and deferred taking possession of Guntur till the death of the Nizam's brother. Haider Ali was mentioned in the treaty as Haider-Naik, a rebel and usurper and the English undertook to wrest Karanatik and Balaghat from him, and withheld from the Nizam on payment of seven lakhs a year. They further agreed to pay *chouth* to the Marathas. The Court of Directors disapproved the treaty, and censured the conduct of those who had negotiated it. During this 'disgraceful decade', writes an Anglo-Indian historian, 'the Madras Presidency was sunk in peculation, profligancy as deeply as that of Bengal with the additional vice of poltroonery.'

Haider who now became fully aware of the intentions of the English, decided to go to war with them. He felt that he must fight for his very existence. The British had seized some of his forts and destroyed a part of his fleet. But he quickly recovered from his losses. Colonel Smith captured several of his fortresses, and Haider, afraid of the Marathas, offered to make peace and cede Baramahal together with lakhs of rupees. But the President demanded impossible terms. In despair Haider prepared

for a decisive conflict with the English and with amazing energy recovered all the fortresses yet lost. He exacted four lakhs from the Raja of Tanjore and then advanced towards Madras, and appeared before its walls. The Council offered to make peace but all that Haider agreed to was a truce for twelve days. Colonel Smith was decoyed from Madras. Haider who suddenly reached St. Thome called upon the Madras Council to make peace with him. A treaty was made (3rd April, 1769) by which mutual restitution of conquest was agreed upon. It was to be an offensive and defensive alliance and the Company pledged itself to support Haider against any of the enemies in the Deccan. The English lost all the provinces which they had seized and promised to lend a contingent in the event of attack.

Having concluded this treaty with the English, Haider Ali ceased to pay the stipulated sum to the Marathas and invaded their territory. The Peshwa collected a large army at Poona and quickly reduced many of his forts. Haider was driven in a very awkward position and with difficulty retreated to Seringapatam. The Marathas followed close upon his heels and laid siege to his capital. Haider asked the Madras Council to send him help but it refused to carry out the obligation imposed upon by the treaty, and left him to his fate. The Marathas pressed hard and Haider had to purchase peace by paying them thirty-six lakhs of rupees and by agreeing to pay an annual tribute of fourteen lakhs. He was compelled to yield a portion of his territories which considerably reduced the size of his kingdom. This was a serious breach of faith and Haider was deeply enraged with the English. He nursed a desire for revenge which he exacted after a period of ten years.

The affairs of the Carnatic

Mohammad Ali as has been said before was a weak ruler, and like the Nawabs of Bengal entirely dependent upon the English. He was not satisfied with the treatment that was meted out to him, and always complained of injustice and highhandedness. He appealed to the King of England and the latter sent his representatives to enquire into the truth of his allegations. Encouraged by the King's response to his appeal, he began to put forward demands which it was impossible to concede. He pressed the Madras Council to assist him in bringing to book the Rajah of Tanjore who was a feudatory of his, and whom he now charged with the non-payment of tribute. It will be recalled that in 1762 a treaty was made between the Nawab and the Rajah by which the latter had agreed to pay an annual tribute to the former. As the treaty had been arranged by the governor

of Madras, Mohammad Ali complained to the English that the tribute had not been paid by the Rajah who was guilty of contumaciousness. Besides, it was alleged that he had intrigued with Haider Ali against the Marathas. Mohammad Ali desired the destruction of the Rajah and sought English help in effecting his object.

The President sent an army into the country, but the inhabitants of Tanjore offered a stubborn resistance and after some fighting peace was made by which the Rajah agreed to pay fifteen lakhs of rupees. Two years later the Madras Council was asked again to help Mohammad Ali, and a charge was bolstered up against the Rajah that he had secretly communicated with the Nizam and the Marathas. The Rajah had no money, he had already been hard put to it to find the amount that he had pain on the previous occasion. The President was well aware of these facts; still he chose to send a force into Tanjore which deposed the Rajah and gave the kingdom to the Nawab. The Directors disappoved of this action and ordered the restoration of the principality to its rightful owner. The Governor was dismissed, and his successor atonce carried out the orders of the Court of Directors and reinstated the Rajah in his ancestral throne.

As soon as it was known that Tanjore had been made over to the Nawab; Benfield, a Madras civilian, put forward his demands and asked for the repayment of his loans. Benfield was a notorious officer about whom is was openly said that he had amassed a fortune by fraudulent means and that his loans to the Nawab were secured by assignments on the revenues of Tanjore. There were other creditors among the civil servants who used to lend money at exhorbitant rates of interest. The Madras Council held that the claim was not established. But the majority of members who were wellowing in the mire of corruption decided that the matter should be reconsidered. Lord Pigot, the Governor, opposed the proposal with all his efforts but in vain. He suspended two of the members and an open quarrel ensued with other members of the Council. The recalcitrant majority seized the Governor, threw him into prison and took the affairs of the presidency into their own hands. The unfortunate man died in prison in 1771. Hastings did not move in the matter and showed no sympathy for a fellow governor who was in such difficulties. The seven members of the Council were dismissed and fined. Thomas Rumbold was placed in charge of the Government.

Thomas Rumbold

The condition of Madras had grown from bad to worse. Corruption was rife everywhere, and the harmonious working of

the administration of the Government had become difficult. Soon, fresh questions cropped up which demanded immediate attention. The Sirkar of Guntur was in the possession of the Nizam's brother, Basalat Jung who held it from his brother. The Madras Government forced him to take an English contingent in his territories and code Guntur for its maintenance. The Nizam was greatly offended at this and when the Madras Government further asked him to remit the sum of seven lakhs which the English had agreed to pay as tribute for Northern Sirkars, he flew into a rage and charged the English with breach of faith. The matter was amicably settled through Warren Hastings' intervention. He convinced the Nizam of the friendly intentions of the British Government and declared that the Madras Government's action was unauthorised. Although Hastings secured the neutrality of the Nizam by doing so, there is little doubt that the latter began to look with disfavour upon the British alliance and to entertain suspicions about the sincerity of their declared intentions.

The Second Mysore War

It has been said before that Haider was reduced to score straits by the Marathas who levied a heavy blackmail upon him and deprived him of a portion of his territory. He was deeply annoyed with the English for their desertion of him and longed for revenge. The murder of the Peshwa at Poona created a great confusion in Maratha politics and gave Haider an opportunity of improving his position. He attacked Coorg and put down ruthlessly the resistance offered by the native population. Next year he succeeded in defeating the Marathas and recovered the territory of which he had been deprived by them. The Marathas, alarmed by Haider's aggressions; made an alliance with the Nizam and the combined armies marched towards Mysore in 1776. But Haider bribed the generals of the allied army and the expedition failed of its purpose. Again he appealed to the English for help but the Madras Council with characteristic incompetence failed to grasp the situtiom and turned a deaf ear to his requests. Meanwhile war broke out between France and England and the Madras Government adopted an attitude which drove them into a quarrel first with the Marathas and then with Mysore. Sir Hector Munro, Commander-in-Chief of the Madras army, first besieged Pondichery and captured it in 1778. Other French possessions like Chandernagar and Karikal were seized and the Madras Government sent word to Haider that it was proposed to send an expedition to make a French port on the Malabar coast. Haider's reply was that the coast was under his sovereignty and, therefore, he was bound to protect it against external invasion. In complete disregard of Haider's feelings,

Mahe was captured (March 1779). This 'perfidy' exasperated Haider and he began to listen to the overtures of the Marathas.

There were other causes which led to hostilities between Haider and the English. The Maratha Government at Poona had promised to release him from all obligations and to allow him to increase his territories. The quarrel between the English and the Nizam had further encouraged his hopes. Besides, he complained that the English had not observed faithfully the treaty made with him in 1769 nor had they renewed it. Lastly, he was prepared for war. He had a well organized and well disciplined army manned by French officers and eager to drive the English out of India. In 1799 a Danish missionary Swartz waited upon Haider to induce him to make peace with the English but his mission did not succeed. Haider condemned the perfidy of the English and declared himself their irreconcilable foe.

Haider had informed the Marathas that he would gladly join a conference to drive the English out of India and forthwith a coalition was formed consisting of the Nizam, the Marathas and Haider Ali. Muhammad Ali had been asking to combat the Mysore menace but the Madras Government had paid no heed to his advice.

The Triple Alliance of which mention has been made before was a serious matter. The Madras Government was corrupt and inefficient and had hopelessly bungled in dealing with Haider Ali. Their army was clamouring for pay and its Chief Commander Sir Hector Munro was suffering from physical and mental decline. At Calcutta the war had drained the resources of the Company and the business of the Government was much hampered by the quarrel between Hastings and his colleagues. At Bombay too there was similar financial bankruptcy, imbecility, incompetence and corruption. The issue of the coming war was a foregone conclusion.

Invasion of the Carnatic

An exact idea of the incompetence of Thomas Rumbold, the Governor of Madras, may be formed from his farewell minute, written just on the eve of his departure in which he said that he was leaving the country in a state of perfect tranquillity. Nothing could be more untrue. Haider had made grand preparations, had collected a force the like of which had never been seen before in South India. It consisted of 83,000 men, a pack of artillery containing 100 guns made by European engineers and his supplies were ably managed by Poornea. In mosques and temples prayers were offered for his success. The Madras Govern-

ment ridiculed the idea of invasions until incendiarism and carnage roused it from 'a slumber which has no example in the history of the world'.[1] In July 1730 Haider Ali invaded the Carnatic with a terrific violence and though Burke's rhetorical outburst gives us a highly exaggerated picture of what happened, there is no doubt that the people suffered much at the hands of his army.

Wilks writes :

"The prevalent impression is erroneous, although fairly deducible from the records of Madras, that Haider on his first descent, perpetrated the wanton and indiscriminate destruction of the whole country; a measure directly subversive of his ultimate views of permanent conquest. He calculated on the lapse of a long interval, before the operations of war, and the aid of a French Corps, should put him in possession of Fort St. George; and around that centre of the British power, and its maritime communications, he certainly drew a line of merciless desolation, marked by the continuous blaze of flaming towns and villages. He directed the indiscriminate mutilation of every human being who should linger near the ashes, in disobedience of the mandate for instant emigration, accompanied by their flocks and herds, thus consigning to the exclusive dominion of the beasts of the forest, the desert which he interposed between himself and his enemies. This line extended inland from thirty to fifty-five miles, according to circumstances, and from the head of the lake of Paliacate in the north, to a southern limit, within a few miles of Pondichery, which of course was included within the scope of his immediate protection."[2]

Burke's oratorical fancy ran riot in describing the scene :

"He (Haider Ali) drew from every quarter whatsoever his savage ferocity could add to his new rudiments in the art of destruction; and compounding all the materials of fury, havoc, and desolation into one black cloud, he hung for a while on the declivities of the mountains. Whilst the authors of all these evils were idly and stupidly gazing on this menacing meteor, which blackened all their horizon, it suddenly burst, and poured down the whole of its contents upon the plains of the Carnatic. Then ensued a scene of woe, the like of

1. Wilks, South India II, p. 256.
2. Ibid.

> which no eye had seen, no heart conceived, and which no tongue can adequately tell. All the horrors of war before known or heard of were mercy to that new havoc. A storm of universal fire blasted every field, consumed every house, destroyed every temple. The miserable inhabitants fleeing from their flaming villages in part were slaughtered; others with regard to sex, to age, to the respect of rank or sacredness of function-fathers torn from children, husbands from wives, enveloped in a whirlwind of cavalry, and amidst the goading spears of drivers, and the trampling of pursuing horses, were swept into captivity in an unknown and hostile land. Those who were able to evade this tempest, flew to the walled cities but escaping from fire, sword and exile they fell into the jaws of famine."

Wilks observes that black columns of smoke could be seen from St. Thomas's Mount, only nine miles from Madras and the victims of Haider's fury poured into the capital in large numbers. Sir Hector Munro, who was nearly fifty-five years of age and possessed neither military aptitude nor strategical acumen, proceeded to Coonjevaram to relieve Arcot which Haider had besieged. Colonel Baillie was despatched from Guntur with 2,813 men to join the Commander-in-Chief. Haider Ali sent his son Tipu to prevent this junction and Colonel Baillie informed his chief that it was not possible for him to join. All that Sir Hector did to help Baillie was to send Colonel Fletcher with a force of 1,100 men. Haider surrounded the British troops and defeated Baillie in an engagement which resulted in heavy carnage. The Mysoreans would have massacred the whole army had it not been for the interference of the French officers. Many were killed and wounded and vast stores and baggage fell into Haider's hands. Arcot fell in October, 1780, and Munro threw his heavy guns into the great tank of Coonjevaram and disgracefully retreated to Madras.

Hastings takes prompt action

Hastings behaved in this crisis with great courage and coolness. He saw that it was impossible for the British to carry on two wars with such dangerous enemies as Haider and the Marathas, and therefore decided to take strong action. He suspended Whitehill, the officiating Governor of Madras, and atonce sent an expeditionary force under the veteran Commander Sir Eyre Coote who had previously fought in the Deccan against the French. He was entrusted with a sum of 15 lakhs of rupees for the use of the army and Hastings raised a loan for the first time to give further relief. He weakened Haider's position by

detaching from him the Marathas. Early in 1781 the Raja of Berar had been won over and a little later a treaty was made with Sindhia by which he agreed to bring about peace between the other Maratha chiefs and the British. These negotiations resulted in the famous Treaty of Salbai (May, 1782) which separated the Marathras from Haider Ali.

Sir Eyre Coote's Victories

Sir Eyre Coote on his arrival at Madras found the army in a helpless condition. He raised their drooping spirits and marched to the relief of Chingalpat as well as Wandewash which was besieged by Haider. Wandewash was barely defended by Lieutenant Flint at this time. When a French squadron appeared off the Coromandel coast, Haider moved down to Cuddalore which he would have captured if the french had helped him. But the French Admiral sailed back to Bourbon and the English forces could not make progress. Coote attacked the fortified temple of Chidambaram but he was driven back. Encouraged by this temporary success, Haider decided to risk a general engagement. He attacked the English at Porto Novo (1st July, 1781) but after heavy fighting on both sides, he was defeated with a loss of 1,000 men. Another engagement was fought on the spot where Baelbe's force was cut off, but it was indecisive and both sides claimed the victory. A third battle followed in September at Shollinghur in which Haider was completely defeated and he lost 5,000 men.

War with the Dutch

Lord Macartney had now become the Governor of Madras. He was an Irish nobleman of high character and ripe experience. As war had broken out between Holland and, England Haider atonce negotiated their co-operation in driving the English out of India. Lord Macartney atonce planned an attack on Negapatam, their chief settlement on the Coromandel coast, 1,600 miles south of Madras. The Dutch were overpowered and the colony came into British hands. Soon after Trincomali in Ceylon was also captured. Although the British arms had triumphed in these campaigns, the war had so heavily taxed their resources that they felt the necessity of entering into a treaty with Muhammad Ali (1781). All the revenues of the Carnatic were assigned to the Company for a period of five years, reserving one-sixth exclusively for the use of the Nawab.

Colonel Braithwaite

Colonel Braithwaite had been sent with a force of 2000 men to protect Tanjore from Tipu's invasion but he met with great

reverses at the hands of the Mysore army which numbered 20,000 foot and had 20 guns. The English Colonel and his men fought bravely but they were at last overpowered. This heavy disaster was counterbalanced by the success of Major Abingdom at Tellichery which was besieged by Haider for eighteen months. The Nairs of Malabar, who were subject to him, derived encouragement from this unfavourable turn of fortune and rebelled against him and even in Coorg there was an attempt to overthrow his power.

Haider was greatly disappointed at these reverses. As he surveyed his position after two years of war, he was filled with gloom and regretted the haste with which he had declared war upon the English. The French had deceived him, the Nizam had not come to his help and Hastings detached from him the Marathas. War had brought him no advantage so far and he determined to concentrate his efforts on the western coast, the weakest part of his dominions. But luckily for him a ray of hope became visible when the French Admiral Suffren appeared on the coast in 1782 with a large fleet.

Naval Action

The French Admiral was encountered by Sir Edward Hughes the commander of English ships and in the course of the year (1782) four engagements were fought. Suffren landed 2,000 men on the coast who joined Haider but their junction did not alter the situation. The great success of De Suffren, however, was the capture of Trincoomalee in August 1782. Admiral Hughes ruturned to Madras and expressed his intention to proceed to Bombay to put in order his vessels which had been shattered by a number of hotly contested engagements. He was requested to stay but he refused to do so. The plight of the English was deplorable. Haider was master of the Carnatic; the French had established their power on the seas and were cutting off the supplies of grain to Madras. To this must be added the disquieting news that Bussy was expected with large enforcements. A British admiral came at this time with a large fleet but he also refused to stay at Madras.

Death of Haider

It wat now clear that if Haider was to be subdued, war must be carried into the heart of his kingdom. Colonel Humberstone landed with a large force and advanced against Palghat, one of the strongest fortresses of Haider. He sent Tipu with a contingent against the Colonel but he was driven back with heavy loss. Haider decided to leave the Carnatic and to proceed

to the west coast but he learnt that a French fleet had landed at Porto Novo. The French seized Cuddalore and Tipu also gained some victories. The war was about to begin again in the Carnatic when Haider Ali died of cancer on the 7th December, 1782, at the age of eighty-two.

At the suggestion of his minister Poornea his death was concealed until the arrival of Tipu. His dead body was sent to Seringapatam and was burned there. Tipu expressed his thanks to the minister and all others who had managed the affairs of the State so well during the interregnum. On the 2nd Jauuary, 1783, Tipu gave audience to the chief officers of the army and with feigned humility tried to gain their goodwill.

Character of Haider Ali

Haider Ali is one of the most extraordinary characters in Indian history. He was the architect of his own fortune. He had risen from the position of a common soldier to the soveri-eignty of a powerful kingdom. In person he was middle-sized and stout and his complexion was dark. He had received no education but he was a man of penetrating intellect, much practical sagacity and wonderful memory and possessed an extensive knowledge of the science of war and politics. He could do without writing, complicated arithmetical calculations with the accuracy of a trained accountant. He could speak five languages with fluency and managed his business with order and despatch. Though fond of pomp and magnificance, he had no trace of foolish pride or vain glory in him. His habits were simple. When he sat down to dinner, he ate everything that was served before him and during his marches lived on scanty fare like a common soldier. In his dress he was fond of red or purple colour, and his turban was one hundred cubits in length. He did not like indolent and ease-loving persons and 'the backs and sides of his negligent and extortionate servants were frequently softened by stripes of the whip'.[1] Men who talked much did not find favour with him and in his assemblies only such things were discussed as 'the order and regulation of kingdoms and empires' or swords, muskets, jewels, horses, elephants, or invigorating medicines.[2] He was fond of horses and showed special favour to horse dealers and gave them rich presents when he purchased a horse. He was a shrewd judge of character and appreciated the work of a person soldier or civilian, irrespective of his caste and religion. His favourite minister was Poornea,

1. Mir Husain Ali Khan, History of Hyder Naik, p. 476.
2. M. M. D. L. T. History of Hyder Shah, p. 259.

a Brahman, in whom he reposed great confidence and who managed all his affairs with ability and success. He liked brave men and on occasions put up patiently with their petulence and coarseness. He superintended the work of various branches of the administration in person and attended to the minutest details. He employed capable men as his officers, and in every department appointed a news-recorder, a number of Harkaras and a secret writer, who kept him informed of the doings of his officers. Sometimes he went in disguise into the streets to ascertain the condition and grievances of the people. He was a typical despot whose orders were carried out with ruthless vigour, Like many other men of his age, he was fond of pleasure and the intervals of his leisure were enlivened by the performances of dancing girls. He was both generous and mean and sometimes inflicted the most brutal punishments on his prisoners. He did not care much for religion and refused to take sides in sectarian disputes. On one occasion when a quarrel broke out between the Shias and Sunnis, he is reported to have said:

> "If you ever again waste and destroy your time and that of the Sarkar in such an irreverent wicked dispute, you may rely on it, a camel bag and a mallet will be ready for you."[1]

A European who saw him writes:

> "What religion people profess or whether they profess any at all, that is perfectly indeficient to him. He has none himself, and leaves every one to his choice."[2]

He was a great soldier. He had a large army well trained and disciplined by European and Indian officers. He had a European force under a Frenchman and a squadron of Hussars under a German. He had a keen eye for young men who were fit for military purposes and felt no difficulty in selecting recruits. He had an intimate knowledge of arms and weapons of all kinds. He was always anxious for the welfare of his soldiers and supplied them with money, military stores and grain for men and cattle. He spent large sums of money in constructing forts and ramparts and did everything to make his military organization strong and efficient. He had raised a battalion of orphans too whom he had brought up at his own expense.[3]

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1. Mir Husain Ali Khan, History of Hyder Naik, p. 484.
2. John Wilks, South of India, Vol. II, p. 576.
2. Wilks, II, p. 577.

The total strength of Haider's army is estimated at 1,62,500 by Mir Husain Ali Khan. See appendex on p. 513. The French authority puts it at 1,50,000.

Haider was master of a large kingdom which extended over an area of 80,000 square miles and yielded revenue amounting to 2 crores of rupees. That he administered those extensive territories successfully is clear from Swartz's testimony:

> "When I sat near Hyder naik, I particularly observed in what a regular succession, and with what rapid despatch his affairs proceeded one after the other. Whenever he made a pause in speaking, an account was read to him of the district, and letters received. He heard it, and ordered the answer immediately. The writers ran, wrote the letter, read it, and Hyder affixed his seal. Thus, in one evening, a great many letters were expedited. Hyder can neither read nor write, but his memory is excellent. He orders one man to write a letter and read it to him, then he calls another to read it again. If the writer has in the least deviated from his orders, his head pays for it."[1]

Tipu's position

Tipu inherited from his father a large kingdom, a treasure amounting to three crores of rupees and jewels of incalculable value. He possessed a large army containing more than 1,00,000 men, trained and disciplined by European as well as Indian officers. With these resources he decided to continue the war against the English.

War continued

War was continued by Tipu. Sir Eyre Coote had left on account of ill-healh from Bengal where he died soon afterwards. He was succeeded in command by General Stuart who possessed none of the qualities of a great soldier. He was headstrong, incompetent and unwilling to carry out orders and remained inactive for two months. Meanwhile Bussy landed at Cuddalore on the 10th April, 1783, but he found on his arrival that the force which Tipu had left to co-operate with him was inadequate. Stuart also moved towards Cuddalore Several skirmishes were fought between the two armies. But his blunders weakened the English position and Bussy was about to deal a decisive blow when the news came that the Treaty of Versailles had been signed between the English and the French. On his arrival in Madras General Stuart was taken into custody by Lord Macartney and sent to England.

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1. Wilks, South India II, pp. 575-79.

Meanwhile the Bombay Government had sent General Mathews to attack Bednore which surrendered unconditionally. But Tipu soon recovered it. Then he turned to the siege of Mangalore which offered a strenuous resistance for nine months and did not surrender until the garrison was reduced to 850 men. Another expedition under Fullerton captured the fort of Palghat and the City of Coimbatore and prepared to advance on Seringapatam. But his plan was thwarted by the Madras Governor who asked him to suspend all operations. Thus was General Fullerton's progress arrested by the action of the Governor.

Treaty of Mangalore March 1784

Lord Macartney opened negotiation with Tipu in spite of Hastings' instructions to the contrary. Hastings' view was that the terms of peace should be dictated beneath the walls of Seringapatam as Haider had done in the previous war at the gates of Madras. Government committed a great folly in asking Fullerton to withdraw and in conducting these negotiations 'fully maintained on this occasion their traditionary characteristic of inbecility.'[1]

The Commissioners of Madras Government who were sent to conclude the treaty waited upon Tipu at Mangalore. They were admitted into his presence and treated with studied disrespect. They bewailed the emptiness of their treasury, the exhaustion of their credit and the impossibility of getting supplies from Bengal. At last the Treaty of Mangalore was signed by which mutual restitution of conquests was agreed upon and Tipu took good care to make it appear that the English were the suppliants for peace. The treaty brought much discredit upon the Government of Madras and lowered the reputation of the Company. Tipu's haughtiness found expression in the following announcement:

"The English Commissioners stood with their heads uncovered and the treaty in their hands for two hours, using every form of flattery and supplication to induce compliance. The vakils of Poona and Hyderabad united in the most abject entreaties and his Majesty the Shadow of God, was at length softened into assent."

The Bengal Government objected to this treaty on several grounds. The Nawab of Carnatic was not mentioned in the treaty although it was made to secure the peace of his dominions. There was no provision to secure the Company or Muhammad Ali against the old claims of Mysore upon Trichinopoly.

1. Marshman, History of India, Abridged edition p. 204.

Nothing was said about peace with the Marathas. Lastly, the clause that the English were not to assist the enemies of Tipu, or make war upon his allies, was contrary to their instructions of the 14th November, 1783. As disavowal of the treaty at this stage was bound to lead to confusion and embarrassment to the Company's affairs it was ratified and a desire was expressed that additional stipulations should be submitted to Tipu for consideration.

Whatever success was achieved by the English in these operations was due to the ability, energy and vigour of Warren Hastings. The incompetent Government of Madras would have ruined. English interests had it not been for the timely assistance rendered by him. In fairness one thing must be said in favour of the Madras Government. It was much troubled by the quarrels between the army officers who held their Commissions from the King and the officers of the Company. The situation was rendered worse by the difference between the Madras and Bengal Government and the absence of a common superior who could control both and give final decisions in critical moments.

CHAPTER VIII

Warren Hastings as Governor of Bengal

Early career of Warren Hastings

In April 1772 Cartier was succeeded by Warren Hastings who had already been in the service of the Company for a little more than 20 years. Born at Churchill in Oxfordshire on December 6 in 1732 he had been educated at Westminster where he showed uncommon intellectual powers. He came out to India in 1750 as a writer in the Company's service at Calcutta. His pay in the first year amounted only to £36 but what made the Company's service attractive in spite of these low emoluments was the opportunity of engaging in trade on one's own account. Hastings had shown business instincts from the very start and he acquired a good knowledge of trade and the people among whom he worked. When Sirajudowlah's army advanced upon Calcutta, Hastings was imprisoned at Murshidabad but he was released after a short time. He owed his release to his own tact and diplomacy and even at this early period of his life he became a favourite with the Indian aristocracy. After the Battle of Plassey in August 1758 he was appointed Resident at Mir Jafar's court. He utilised this opportunity to his best advantage. He came in contact with the officers of the State and the leading men of the Province, and as he was acquainted with Persian, he learnt a good deal about their character, habits and ways of life. In February, 1761 he left Murshidabad to take his seat on the Council Board at Calcutta, and then he found himself in a different position, for the Presiding Officer Mr. Vansittart was opposed by all the members. Hastings was employed in important duties and seems to have earned a decent competence for himself. In 1754 he returned to England after the Battle of Buxar and it is said his fortune amounted to £ 30,000. The atmosphere of the East India House was very corrupt. The servants of the Company called 'Nabobs' by reason of the wealth which they had brought from India, wielded much influence by and lavish bribes and gifts made their way in to the Parliament. The situation became deplorable and the Indian question attracted the attention of the Ministers, the chief of whom the Earl of Chatham, denounced the baneful effect of riches and luxury on the British character and constitution. When Parliament took

up the matter in 1767 a number of persons were called upon to give evidence. Warren Hastings was also among them and it is said the members of the Committee who examined the witnesses were greatly impressed by his prompt, masterly and intelligent expositions. Hastings was in need of employment and through Clive's good offices was appointed second member of Council at Madras. He left for India in March 1769 and during his voyage fell in love with a certain Mrs. Imhoff whom he afterwards took for wife. At Madras he was placed in charge of the Investment on which depended the dividends of the Company. In this post Hastings gave evidence of his sagacity and foresight with the result that in 1771 he was elevated to the position of Governor of Bengal. He knew of the difficulties and dangers that lay a head. As his latest biographer says. In his fortieth year he had reached the top of the tree, but it was here that the danger of a fall became the greatest. He left Madras in February 1772 and entered on his new duties after a couple of months.

The situation in Bengal

The condition of Bengal was as bad as that of the Carnatic. The famine of 1770 had caused havoc in the city of Calcutta and Bengal and Behar were practically ruined. There wasno system of famine relief and the recovery had been slow indeed. Clive's dual system had led to great evils. The Nawab's authority had been destroyed but no proper substitute was found. The Company held the Dewani of Bengal by the Emperor's grant and ruled the Province jointly with the Nawab. Yet the only districts which the Emperor held, i. e. Kara and Allahabad were a gift from the Company and the Nawab held his office merely by their permission. The Company still nominally owed allegiance and paid tribute to the Emperor, but he was at Delhi, in the hands of the Marathas, the most dangerous rivals of the English. The tribute which the English paid him and the revenues of Kara and Allahabad were simply additions to the power of the Marathas.

The recognition of these facts—the Emperor a pawn in the hands of the Marathas, and the Nawab his representative, a non-entity—meant a revolution in the position of the Company and implied that the burden of Government should be shouldered by it. The territories held by the British were acquired in a variety of ways. They may be divided into three classes. The first class were comprised of the districts of Burdwan, Midnapur and Chittagong acquired in 1760 which were held free of revenue. The second class consisted of Calcutta itself and the twenty-four Parganas obtained after the Battle of Plassey. In the third class were included Bengal, Behar and Orissa of which the

Company was the Dewan, i. e. had the right to collect the revenues and administer the finances. Out of the revenues thus collected they paid 26 lakhs to the Emperor and 32 lakhs to the Nawab of Bengal and kept the surplus to themselves.

The double government of Clive which established power without responsibility had broken down. The Company accepted no responsibility for the administration of the Country and weakened the Nawab's authority by disbanding his army which they regarded as an unnecessary item of expense. There was no machinery by which law and order could be enforced and revenue could be properly collected. A distinguished writer thus describes the effects of the Dual System:

> "The chief result of the Dual System was to let loose a horde of minor officials to prey on the peasants. The minister was helpless as he could not enforce his authority, and the English were largely indifferent. The few who were sympathetic had not the necessary knowledge, experience or power to intervene effectively. There inevitably followed a rapid increase of interval disorder. Crime, dacoity, vagabondage grew by leaps and bounds. The oppression of the peasants led to decrease in cultivation, and that to a loss of revenue as peasants left their land and despair. Thus the famine was not the only cause of the return of the jungle. Incursions of bands of roving robbers and beggars and of neighbouring hill tribes grew yearly more serious. And in a very short time Bengal was reduced to a pitiable state."[1]

Speaking of this system Becher, the Resident at Murshidabad wrote:

> "It must give pain to an Englishman to have reason to think, that since the accession of the Company to the Diwani, the condition of the people of this country has been worse than it was before; and yet I am afraid the fact is undoubted. This one country, which flourished under the most despotic and arbitrary government, is verging towards its ruin, while the English have really so great a share in the administration."

The constitution of the government of the Company was highly defective. The services were corrupt and young English men exercised unlimited authority in their districts. As Hastings said, the boys of the service were the sovereigns of the country

(1) M. Davies, Warren Hastings, p. 74.

under the unmeaning title of supervisors, collectors of the revenue, administrators of justice and rulers of the people. The Governor and Council had no real authority and were powerless to administer the affairs of a large dominion. There was great need to establish a centralised authority with wide powers.

The Dual System had no doubt worked to the ruin of the country and its people. But it was not easy to find an alternative. There were difficulties of enforcing an English system in a country which had never known it. In a letter Hastings declared that the reforms needed were no more than a return to the best usages of the Mughal rule. The difficulty of working an Indian system by an English personnel without an intimate knowledge of Indian conditions, law and custom was enormous.

Such was the state of affairs in Bengal with which Hastings had to deal. He approached his task with patience, boldness and vigour with a mind entirely free from prejudice and dogmatism. His appreciation of Indian conditions enabled him to avoid the pitfalls into which a mere theorist is apt to fall. He summed up his programme in these words :

(1) To implant the authority of the Company and the sovereignty of Great Britain in the constitution of this country.

(2) To abolish all secret influence, and make the Government itself responsible for all measures, by making them all pass by its avowed authority.

(3) To remove all impediments which prevented the complaints of the people from reaching the ears of the supreme administration, or established an independent despotism in its agents.

(4) To relieve the *ryots* from oppressive taxes.

(5) To introduce a regular system of justice and protection in the country.

(6) To relieve the distress of the Company and pay off their heavy debts here by a uniform and regular mode of collecting their rents, by savings in expenses and by foreign acquisitions of wealth.

(7) To enlarge the political influence of the Company without enlarging the territory or dividing their military strength.[1]

1. The trial of Muhammad Reza Khan and Shitab Roy was political in its nature.

REFORMS OF HASTINGS

End of Dual System

Hastings abolished the Dual System of Clive which had led to serious misgovernment and oppression of the people and in this he was fully supported by the Directors. The Company now declared its intention to stand further as Dewan and Hastings dismissed the two Deputy Nawabs Muhammad Reza Khan and Shitab Roy from the Dewanship of the Provinces of Bengal and Behar respectively. They were arrested on charges of speculation but nothing could be proved against them and they were finally acquitted. In place of the two Boards of Revenue at Murshidabad and Patna, he created a single Board of Revenue at Calcutta and removed the Treasury (Khalsa) from Murshidabad to Calcutta. The Indian revenue collectors were abolished and their place was taken by English collectors. The Nawab was deprived of the powers of government, and was reduced to the position of a mere pensioner of the Company. His allowance was cut down from 32 to 16 lakhs and thus a large saving was effected. As the Nawab was a minor, Hastings appointed Munni Begam, Mir Jafar's widow as his regent in preference to the Nawab's mother and accepted one and a half lakhs from the lady for himself—a payment which even members of Council did not consider justifiable. The appointment, however, served Hastings' purpose for the relations between him and Munni

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Hastings to procure evidence and 'to bring to light any embezzlement, fraud, or malversation which may have been committed in the office of the Naib Dewan) This 'monstrous business' was encouraged by the Directors who wrote to Hastings.

"..... ......that you are too well apprised of the subtlety and disposition of Nuncomar to yield him any post of authority which may be turned to his own advantage or detrimental to the Company's interest. Though we have thought it necessary to intimate to you how little we are disposed to delegate any power or influence to Nuncomar yet should his information and assistance be serviceable to you in your investigation of the conduct of Muhammad Reza Khan, you will yield him such encouragement and reward as his trouble and the extent of his services may deserve."

Raja Shitab Roy was a man of high character. He died of a broken heart soon after his release and Hastings tried to make amends for his mistake by appointing his son Kalyan Singh as Rai Rayan for Behar.

Begam had always been most cordial. The post of Dewan or Superintendent of the Household was given to Raja Gura Das, son of Nand Kumar, obviously as a reward for what his father had done to procure evidence against Reza Khan.

Trade Reforms

The commercial character of the English government in Bengal must be borne in mind to understand the measures which Hastings devised to improve the trade conditions. As has been said before, the trade of Bengal external as well as internal was in a miserable condition. In 1770 the foreign trade amounted to not more than £ 1,00,000 and the internal trade was hampered by numerous tolls and taxes that were levied by Zamindars and officials and the monopoly that was enjoyed by the Company's servants. Hastings abolished the *dastak* and the trade of Bengal was thrown open to all. He suppresed the custom houses of Zamindars which prevented the easy passage of goods from one part of the Province to the other. The only customs houses which were allowed to exist were at Calcutta, Hugli, Murshidabad, Patna and Dacca. The oppression of the Bengal weavers by the 'gumashtas' of the Company had led to a decline in cotton piecegoods trade and a deterioration of its quality. The Directors ordered the abolition of the 'gumashtas' and replaced the old system by a free competition of contractors. Hastings was opposed to free competition, thinking that it would leave too little control over the producers but the Directors were adamant and free competition was enforced. The first effect of the measure was to raise the cost of investment for the prices were restored to a mere normal level. A 'Comptroller of the Investment' was appointed in December 1773 to look after investment and the business transactions of the Company. A uniform duty of 2½ per cent. was to be levied on all goods except salt, betel nut and tobacco and no discrimination was made between the Company, its European merchants and Indians. Steps were taken to encourage foreign trade and Hastings negotiated commercial treaties with the Nawab Vizier and the Raja of Benares and explored the possibilities of having trade relations with Tibet, China and Egypt. One more important change is due to Hastings. He tried to give the Directors a new outlook by telling them that they were no longer a body of traders but masters of a large domain with new duties and responsibilities. He declared that revenue was more important than profits of trade and that investment ought not to occupy the foremost place in their programme.

A practice had sprung up in Bengal of issuing interest notes on the Calcutta Treasury to pay for the investment goods under Messrs. Verelst and Cartier. By 1773 a sum of £ 95,636 was

being paid annually as interest on this account. The Directors insisted on larger investments regardless of the exhausted state of the country. Hastings stopped the practice of issuing notes and paid the investment contractors in cash. A loan of Rs. 25 lakhs was raised to meet the extra burden on the treasury but by August 1774 it was able to meet all liabilities without any further borrowing.

Land Revenue

The equitable and highly developed Mughal revenue system had broken down in the chaos that followed the downfall of the Empire. The accountants and Qanungos had disappeared and the old village communities had decayed. The cultivators were deprived of all protection against extortion and oppression and the revenue had greatly declined. Some sort of system was essential. But the English were woefully ignorant of this branch of the administration as it was the most difficult to understand.

The land revenue system of Bengal was in a state of confusion. As the Company held the Dewani, it was their duty to collect the revenues. The collection was entrusted to Zamindars who were in practice hereditary and in some districts belonged to rich and noble families. The peasants were often at the mercy of the Zamindars against whom they had no redress. The payment of revenue depended upon the power of the Zamindar to defy. If he was a powerful man, he rackrented the peasantry and paid little to the Government. In 1769 English 'Supervisors' were appointed to safeguard the interests of the *ryot* and supervise the working of the courts of justice. But this system failed because the supervisors had no direct responsibility; they were merely asked to supervise the work of Indian officials. Secondly, they were not under the Council of Calcutta which had no control over them. Indeed, it was treated with scant regard by the Council of Revenue set up at Murshidabad. Thirdly, they were allowed to engage in private trade and this led to great abuses. The result was that the Company was faced with financial bankruptcy which was aggravated by the famine of 1770. The Company saw these evils and felt that the only way to remedy them was to assume direct responsibility for the administration of Bengal. The Directors decided to take over the administration of revenue from Indian hands and the task was entrusted to Warren Hastings.

When Hastings assumed charge of the administration of Bengal, he saw clearly that the system needed to be reformed. The produce of land was shared between three parties—the State, the Zamindar and the cultivator. A just distribution between

these three required a thorough understanding of the problem involved; an exact knowledge of the value of every estate and holding; an efficient system of collection and a system of law courts.

In May 1772 the Governor and Council reached certain decisions in regard to the revenue and administration which may be summed up as follows:

(1) The lands were to be let out to revenue farmers for a period of 5 years. (2) A Committee of Circuit, consisting of the Governor and four members of the Council, was to be appointed to visit the principal districts and form the five years' settlements. (3) The Supervisors posted in the districts were henceforth to be called Collectors (4) No *banya* or agent of the Collectors should be permitted to farm any portion of the revenues. (5) Presents to the Collectors form Zamindars and from the *ryots* to the Zamindars were not allowed. (6) The Collectors and their agents were not allowed to advance money to the *ryots*. Such were the labours which the Committee of Circuit set to themselves. They desired 'to secure the inhabitants the quiet possession of the lands, while they held them on terms of cultivation'. The leases granted to the farmers were to record precisely the exact claims of the *ryots* and all demands not included in the lease rendered the former contractors to whom the lands were farmed liable to severe penalties. The *ryots* were to be given *pattas* by the farmers in which conditions of the holding and the amount to be paid were stated clearly. A regular establishment was provided in the Kutcheries of the district to keep the charges of collection within certain limits.[1]

The lands were farmed to the existing Zamindars for a period of five years with a view to give them some sincerity and a new assessment was made after making enquiries into the productivity of land in each district. The interests of the *ryots* were guarded by *pattas* which have been mentioned before. Hastings judged it advantageous to enter into agreements with the old Zamindars because he thought that their entire deprivation would be prejudicial to revenue. As they had long been in the business, he concluded they had acquired an ascendancy over the minds of the *ryots* and ingratiated their affections.' He expected solid advantages 'from continuing the lands under the management of those who had a natural and perpetual interest in their prosperity.[2] This was the argument which Hastings put forward in support of his five-year settlement.

(1) Fifth Report on East India Affairs I p. CCXVI

(2) Ibid, p. CCXVII

The problem of devising a system of collection was the next difficulty. Hitherto the English 'Supervisors' provided such agency. But they were unjust and rapacious. As Hastings did not dare do away with them altogether, for fear of letting loose an army of fierce opponents who would do their best to thwart all the measures of the administration, he greatly reduced their powers and changed their designation to that of 'Collector'. His policy was to bring Government into direct touch with the land property owners and abolishing 'intermediate agencies'.

Soon after this settlement, took place that change in Government which has been dealt with previously and which involved the removal of the principal offices from Murshidabad to Calcutta.

Even this system did not satisfy Hastings. The Collectors were allowed to engage in private trade and so long as this practice continued, they and their agents were bound to resort to shifty ways to the detrimiment of the Company and the *ryot*. In 1774 he was able to persuade the Directors to abolish the Collectors and to substitute for them District Boards which were presided over by members of Council These Boards did revenue work and exercised civil jurisdiction subject to the control of the Supreme Council or its Revenue Board at Calcutta. But even this system did not yield satisfactory results. The withdrawal of Collectors from districts checked the growth of a sense of responsibility among the junior officers of the Company. It reduced the number of European officers, and deprived those who remained, of the opportunity of acquiring knowledge of revenue matters. The Directors must bear the blame for these experiments. It has been stated with truth that so long as the stipulated revenue was paid, they did not trouble themselves about the method of collection.

The Company's Service

Hastings made a bold attempt to purify the Company's service. The Collectors were at one time regarded as 'corrupt tyrants' and honesty was rare among them. The chief cause of this was the permission to engage in private trade which could not be withheld so long as the Company paid low salaries. Still, Hastings made a number of regulations to restrict private trade and abolished the *dastak* which was a source of great trouble. A uniform duty was also levied upon goods of all servants of the Company as well as Indian merchants and this effected a great improvement in the morale of the service.

This was all. It must be frankly admitted that he did not succeed in purifying the administration. Had he done so,

Cornwallice would not have found it so corrupt and full of abuses in 1786. Hastings' zeal for reform knew no bounds but he was much handicapped in his work by the attitude of the Directors. They did not support him. Some of them wanted reform but there were many others who were fond of patronage and were ready to condone faults. Hastings did not abolish the Collectors altogether in 1772 for

> "there were amongst them so many sons, cousins, or *eleves* of Directors and intimates of the members of the Council, that it was better to let them remain than provoke an army of opponents against every act of administration .. ..They continue but their power is retrenched."[1]

Administration of Justice

The Mugal system of justice was succeeded by another controlled by Zamindars and officials who were often arbitrary and capricious. Under the Nawabi there were two main channels of justice: The Diwan dealt with civil cases, the Nazim with criminal cases but their jurisdiction was not clearly defined. By 1772 these two officers were overshadowed by a number of subordinate courts that had come into existence. There were ten officers of justice with their respective courts.

1. The *Nazim,* as Supreme Magistrate personally tried capital offences and held his court every Sunday which was called the *Roz adalat.*

2. The *Diwan* tried such cases as related to property, but seldom exercised that authority in person.

3. The Darogha Adalat ul Aliya was the Deputy of the Nazim. He tried all cases of property excepting claims of land and inheritance; he also took cognisance of quarrels, affrays and abusive names.

4. The Darogha Adalat Diwani or Deputy of the Dewan. He was the Judge of property in land.

5. The Faujdar was the officer of the police and decided all crimes not capital.

6. The Qazi tried all cases of inheritance or succession.

7. The Muhtsib was the censor of public morals and also examined weights and measures.

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1. Gleig I, p. 319.

8. The Mufti expounded the Law.[1]

The Qazi was assisted by the Mufti and the Muhtsib. The Mufti wrote the Fatwa and the Qazi delivered the judgment. After the Qazi or Muhtsib disapproved of the Fatwa, the case was referred to the Nazim who summoned a general assembly consisting of law officers and learned men and the decision of this body was final.

In the countryside the court of Zamindars dispensed a rough and ready justice.

Hastings pointed out the defects of the courts. One court encroached upon the jurisdiction of the other and there was no provision for the distribution of justice in distant parts of the province. Nominally the courts were open to all men but in reality only the rich and vagabonds travelled long distance to seek their help. The Collectors and Zamindars oppressed the people and made money for themselves. Such was the cumbrous judicial system of Bengal before Hastings' reform.

The 'governing principle of Hastings' reform as a modern writer remarks was Preservation and not Innovation.'[2] He did not brush aside the indigenous system and never thought of replacing it by new principles, codes and courts. He wanted such reforms as were in consonance with the customs, traditions and beliefs of the people and implied no break from the past. He sought to correct the defects of the Indian systems without destroying them. With the help of the Committee of Circuit, Hastings drew up a scheme of judicial reform in August 1772. Three main features are clearly noticeable.

(1) The district was taken as the unit of the administration and in each district were established Civil and Criminal courts called the Mufassil Dewani Adalat and Mufassil Faujdari Adalat respectively. The matters cognisable in either courts were clearly defined to simplify and reconcile the two types. Justice was made possible for all. The jurisdiction of the Diwani Adalat extended to causes of (*a*) property, real or personal, (*b*) inheritance, marriage or caste disputes, (*c*) debt contract, rent etc. But it was laid down that the questions of succession to Zamindaris and Taluqadaris were outside the jurisdiction of these courts.

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1 Forrest Selections from the State Papers of Hastings II, Appendix B.

2. Davies Administration of Warren Hastings. p. 49.

This exception secured to the Government the power to make a fresh settlement after the expiry of five years.

The jurisdiction of the Adalat Faujdari extended to cases of (1) murder, robbery, theft, etc., (2) felony, forgery, perjury, (3) assaults, affrays, quarrels, adultery and every other breach of the peace and trespass. In this court the Judge had the power to inflict corporal punishment, imprisonment, work on the roads and fine. But capital sentences or those of confiscation could not be executed without confirmation by the court of Sadar Adalat at Calcutta.

(2) Above these local courts were established at Fort William two superior courts called the Sadar Diwani Adalat and the Sadar Nizamat Adalat with appellate jurisdiction. The appeals were made from the District Diwani and Faujdari Courts. In the Sadar Diwani Adalat the appeals were heard by the President and two councillors assisted by the Diwan of the Khalsa, the Head Qanungoe and other officers of the Kutchery. In the absence of the President a third member of Council was invited to assist.

In the Sadar Nizamat Adalat a Deputy of the Nazim presided known as the Darogha Adalat. He was assisted by the Chief Qazi, the Chief Mufti and other learned Maulvis and their duty was to hear appeals from the District Nizamat Adalat. The capital sentences were investigated by this court. If the decisions were upheld by the appellate court, the sentences received the Nawab's formal warrant and were returned to the district courts for execution. The President and Council, however reserved to themselves the right of control over the decisions of the court.

(3) All vexatious fees and Judge's perquisites were abolished. The place of the latter was taken by fixed salaries which ensured honesty and cheapness. The reforms also included general principles for improving the practice of law. Chief among these were an order for recording all procedure, in the courts of every degree, a time-limit set to all litigation, the abolition of legal 'Chauth' and heavy fines, the inhibition of the creditor's right of jurisdiction in his own cause as in the case of Zamindars and the encouragement of arbitration to settle cases of disputed property.

These reforms had their effect. The tyranny of the Magistrate and the Zamindar was put an end to. The jurisdiction of the Zamindar was limited. The head foreman of each pargana could settle on the spot disputes arising between *ryots* to the value of Rs. 10 but they were given no power of imprisonment

or fine and complaints could be lodged against them in the District Courts.

A disputed question was the position of the Mayor's Court which had been established by a Charter in the early years of the settlement to protect and control the servants of the Company in their dealings with one another and against the claims of the native officials. Hastings had no authority to reform this court and he could only do his best to prevent the abuse of its authority.

Hastings caused a compilation of Hindu Civil Law and for this purpose ten learned Pandits were invited to Calcutta. They prepared a Code in Sanskrit which was later translated into Persian and then into English.

In all these changes Hastings had one question uppermost in his mind. It was this : which system would conduce most to the happiness and contentment of the peopie, "It would be a grievance", he said "to deprive the people of the protection of their own laws, but it would be wanton tyranny to require their obedience to others of which they have no possible means of acquiring knowledge."

Currency Reform. A sound and stable currency was introduced by Warren Hastings. A rupee coin of standard weight and fineness was issued from the Government mint at Calcutta in place of rupees of many different values, issued at different places and subject to rapid depreciation. A bank was also established at Calcutta.

The Army. The internal administration of the Province being taken over, it was necessary to reorganize the army. It was brought more effectually under the civil authority and the disorderly rabble called the Pargana Battalions, intended for the unmilitary work of collecting revenue, was disbanded and amalgamated with the regular brigades.

Suppression of lawlessness. The evil of dual government had let loose an army of dacoits in the country varying from small parties to troops of 400 or 500. Anxious as Hastings was for the security of life and property he ordered that dacoits should be hanged in their villages, their families should be reduced to slavery and the village should be fined. Another evil similarly dealt with was that of the Sanyasis, whom Hastings wrongly called 'the gipsies of Hindustan'. The Sanyasis were wandering beggers and belonged to both the Hindu and Muslim communities. They roamed about the country in parties of one thousand to ten thousand and as they were fully armed they caused much trouble

and disorder. They ravaged the country, kidnapped children and plundered the population and it was found extremely difficult to hunt them down because of their rapid movements and the reverence with which they were regarded by the over-credulous and superstitious peasantry of Bengal. Two expeditions, sent against them were destroyed and their officers killed but another force under Captain Stewart succeeded in defeating the Sanyasis. An allusion to the depredations of these beggarly bandits is made in the works of the famous Bengali novelist, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee.

Mission to Tibet. Hastings always desired to give the Company's territories well-guarded frontiers. When the Bhutias invaded the State of Kuch Behar, the Raja appealed to the British for help. A small force was sent but the Bhutias fought with such valour that Captain Jones succeeded in capturing the place after great difficulties. Nearly one hundred of his detachment were killed and wounded. After a good deal of fighting the mountaineers were over-powered and expelled from Kuch Behar. From this campaign originated the famous mission to Tibet. A young civilian was deputed by Warren Hastings to explore the possibilities of opening trade relations with Tibet. He was asked to gather information about the people of the country and the river Brahmaputra. The mission was a failure and Bogle, the officer, who was sent, had to return owing to the pressure of the Chinese authorities who were alarmed at the advent of the British.

Hastings and the Emperor. It has been said in a previeus chapter that the Mughal Emperor had gone to Delhi under the protection of the Marathas. He had become a tool in their hands and Hastings fully realised that their proximity to British territories was 'a snare and Menacing danger'. He acted promptly and stopped the allowance of 26 lakhs of rupees which the Company had agreed to pay to Emperor. Further, he decided to restore the districts of Kara and Allahabad which the

(1) In the Memoirs of Warren Hastings by Gleig I, p. 305, the Sanyasis are described as the inhabitants of the country lying south of the hills of Tibet from Kabul to China. They went about mostly naked from place to place adding to their number by stealing healthy children. Many of these were merchants and pilgrims and were held by all castes of Hindus in great respect. This infatuation prevented the adminstration from dealing with them. They were hardy, bold and enthusiastic to a degree surpassing credit.

Emperor had made over to the Marathas to the Nawab Vizier of Oudh. British troops were sent immediately to occupy these territories.

Estimate of the Reforms

Taken together, all these constructive measures, carried out in the first year of Hastings' administration, amounted to a revolution. They laid a solid basis for the British power in India, so that it was able to survive the formidable avalanche that attacked it in its early stages. They laid the foundation of the empire which was to spread all over India in the next hundred years and added vastly to the prestige and glory of England. Most of the evils that hampered good government were removed and new life and vigour was infused into the administration. The Dewani was turned into a real thing and the responsibility for orderly and methodical administration was accepted by the Company. The army was relegated to a subordinate position in spite of the efforts of Sir Robert Barker, the Commander-in-Chief to the contrary. Clive had given the army a preponderant voice in the determination of policy but Hastings followed a different principle, the soundness of which was proved by subsequent events. In all these disputes he behaved with the utmost patience and added to the strength of his case by observing forbearance and moderation.

It is sometimes said that the reforms of Hastings were due to the suggestions of others and little credit is due to him for he was merely carrying out orders. It is true, the directors had enjoined reform but their introduction required ability, tact and insight into the mind of the Indian population, which Hastings possessed to a degree.

In every country reforms are the result of the influence of enlightened opinion but the man who actually carries them out deserves praise and gratitude for his labours. Hastings worked day and night with devotion and zeal and showed an unrivalled knowledge of the theory and practice of government. He pointed out the defects of the existing constitution of the Company's Government and suggested changes which, if accepted, would have stabilsed political authority and avoided controversies, vulgar and undignified, which disfigured the careers of some of the most remarkable men of the eighteenth century. In a petition to the authorities at home, he pleaded for more power but what was given was a 'ghastly mockery of his hopes and ambitions'. The tragic irony of the situation is well expressed by Mr. Davies.

"He had asked for power but what he had been given was to prove little better than a worthless bauble, a high-sounding but empty title. He had asked for increased authority, and had been given a cabal to deprive him even of what little authority he already possessed. He wanted to win reputation and applause but instead he was to win a criminal's reward".[1] No finer commentary could be made upon the Regulating Act."

The Rohillas and the Treaty with the Nawab Vizier

An Act which brought much odium upon Hastings and for which he was vehemently denounced in Parliament was his share in the Rohilla War. It constituted one of the most important articles of impeachment against him and was the first among Burke's charges. The Parliamentary orators thundered against him for his iniquities in the Rohilla country and for his destruction of 'a fine, gallant and peace-loving race'. It is, therefore, necessary to review briefly the history of 'the Rohillas, and of that portion of the country which is called after their name.

Rohilkhand is now a division of the state of Uttar Pradesh. It comprises six British districts and many well-populated towns and in the middle of the country lies the State of Rampur which is ruled over by a Muslim Ptince who is descended from the Rohillas. The original name of the country was Katehar and it formed a province of the empire of Delhi. It came to be called Rohilkhand in the middle of the eighteenth century when it fell into the hands of the Rohilla Afghans.

After the death of Aurangzeb the authority of the Central Government declined, and the Rohilla Afghans established themselves in the confusion that followed. A soldier of fortune Ali Muhammad Muhammad, rose into prominence and brought a large portion of the couutry under his sway. Similarly, other Afghan Chiefs established themselves in the Doab. Najib Khan who afterwards became the Prime Minister of the Mughal Empire had already begun his distinguished career. He had a Jagir from Ali Muhammad butso rapidlydid he increase his power that he became an influential nobleman at the Mughal Court. Another Afghan Chief Qaim Jung,[2] belonging to the Bangash tribe occupied the territory now comprisedin theFarrukhabad District, and became like Ali Muhammad a ruler of substance.

Thus in the middle of the eighteenth century not only Rohilkhand but a large part of the Doab was in possession of the Rohilla Afghans.

(1) Administration of Warren Hastings, p. 115
(2) Qaim Jung was the son of Muhammad Khan Bengal.

The earliest Afghan immigrants of note who settled in Katehar were Shah Alam and Husain Khan who entered the service of the Mughal Empire in 1673. Husain Khan returned to Afghanistan after some time but he allowed his slave Daud Khan to proceed to India to carve out a career for himself. Daud was an adventurer of considerable ability and warlike spirit and in a short time gathered around himself a large number of followers. Ali Muhammad who was born of Jat parents was brought up by him as a child and converted to Islam.[1]

After Daud's death at the hands of the Raja of Kamayun, Ali Muhammad succeeded to his possessions. He spared no pains to strengthen his power and the circumstances of the time favoured his designs. The Court of Delhi was at this time distracted by the quarrels of rival parties, and Ali Muhammad judged it a good opportunity for withholding tribute and employed the revenue he collected in increasing his military strength. He won over to his side Rahmat Khan who was the son of Shah Alam. He granted him a Jagir and firmly attached him to his interest. After Ali Muhammad's death, his third son succeeded him but he appointed Rahmat Khan as his protector and regent. All the principal Chiefs swore on the Quran that they would be faithful to their master's family and defend its interests. But this promise was not kept, and the chiefs seized and divided the territory among themselves. Hafiz Rahmat took the largest share and became the head of the Rohilla Confederacy.

Hafiz Rahmat was a man of ability and courage. He joined Abdali's ranks at Panipat (1761) and the destruction of Maratha power made it possible for the Rohillas to live in peace and quiet. Hafiz Rahmat governed the country well. He abolished

1. In Hamilton's History the Hinduorigin of Ali Muhammad is denied, the reason being that the Persian work on which Hamilton based his book was written by a man who was patronised by Faizullah Khan, son of Ali Muhammad. Naturally he did not like the idea of assigning a Hindu origin to his master. The Afghans considered Ali Muhammad to have been a son of Daud. But the true account of his origin is given in the Gulistan-i-Rahmat which describes him as a Jat who was converted to Islam, adopted by Daud and named Ali Muhammad. Tradition also supports this view. There was a common saying among the Hindus:

Aise Aise dekho Prabhu ke that
Aonla ka Raja bhayo Bakauli ka Jat

See the glory of God, what changes spring from his will. The Jat of Bakauli became the lord of Aonla.

taxes of every kind a step which led to the encouragement of trade and commerce. Having recovered from the disaster of Panipat, the Marathas returned to Northern India again in 1769 and seized Etawah and certain other districts in the Doab. Their depredations caused uneasiness in the minds of the English and the Rohillas. In 1770 Najibudaulah died and was succeeded by his son Zabita Khan who had some of the qualities of his father. A year later he was expelled from Delhi by the Marathas who went so far as to demand 'Chauth' from the English and the Nawab Vizier and succeeded in persuading the Emperor to leave Allahabad. He stayed near Farrukhabad during the rains and having accepted large gifts from the Nawab made his entry into Delhi on the 25th December, 1771.

The Marathas invaded Rohilkhand in 1772 and plundered and devastated the country. The Rohillas failed to offer successful resistance. The Nawab Vizier was also alarmed for the safety of his dominions and both parties wrote to the English for help against this danger. Sir Robert Barker, the English Commander-in-Chief, who met the Vizier in January 1772, pointed out to the Calcutta Government the difficulty of the situation in which the Vizier was placed. He observed :

> "To remain inactive and see the Rohillas reduced was as bad or worse for he very justly observed that the Rohillas would, to prevent a total extemmation, undoubtedly give up a part of their country, and would of consequence be necessitated to join their arms with the Marathas. Such a general confederacy would inevitably fall on him, as their next object in view, and he further observes that in this case he must claim the performance."

Negotiations for peace between the Marathas, Rohillas and the Vizier were started but no settlement could be reached because the three parties were all utterly unscrupulous and each knew that no trust could be placed in either of the others.[1] At last a treaty was made in June 1772 at Shahabad by which it was agreed that if the Marathas invaded Rohilkhand, the Nawab Vizier should help the invaded army, and if he became successful in obliging the Marathas to retire either by peace or war, he should receive a sum of forty lakhs from the Rohillas. The treaty was signed in the presence of Sir Robert Barker. The precise terms of the treaty must be stated.

"The Vizer of the empire, Shujaudaulah, shall establish the Rohilla Sirdars in their different possessions obliging the Marathas

(1) Strachey, Hastings and the Rohilla War, p, 49.

to retire either by peace or war; this to depend on the pleasure of the Vizier. If at this time, without either war or peace, the Marathas on account of the rains, shall cross and retire, and after the expiration of the rainy season they would again enter the country of the Rohilla, their expulsion is the business of the Vizier. The Rohilla Sirdars in consequence of the above, agree to pay forty lakhs of rupees to the Vizier in the following manner. As the Marathas are now in the country of the Rohilla Sirdars, the Vizier of the empire shall march from Shahabad, as far as may be necessary, to enable the families of the Rohillas to leave the jungle and return to their habitations: Ten lakhs of rupees in specie, in part of the above sum shall then be paid and the remaining thirty lakhs in three years, from the beginning of the year 1180 fasli.

This agreement was sealed in the presence of General Sir Robert Barker."

Early in 1773 the Marathas invaded Rohilkhand again and began to concentrate their forces at Ramghat where the Ganges was fordable. They demanded from Hafiz Rahmat Khan and other Chiefs payment of the bonds for 50 lakhs which had been given to them before through Safdar Jang. The Vizier was also alarmed and he wrote to Hastings that if the Rohillas fulfilled the terms of the treaty and paid forty lakhs he would give half of the sum to the English. If they committed a breach of the agreement and if the English helped him to occupy their country, he would give them 50 lakhs of rupees in ready money and secure them exemption from paying tribute to the Emperor out of the revenues of Bengal. The Bengal Government approved of the first part of the suggestion but they did not commit themselves to any cause of action in regard to Hafiz Rahmat Khan. It was ultimately decided that the combined armies of the English, the Vizier and the Rohillas should march against the Marathas and drive them out of the country. Preparations were fully made but the Marathas did not risk an engagement and retired. The revolution in Poona politics led their armies to withdraw from Northern India and thus the danger was averted.

After the departure of the Marathas the Vizier who was in need of money demanded forty lakhs from the Rohillas but, Hafiz Rahmat Khan on one pretext or another evaded the demand. His duplicity gave the Vizier his long desired opportunity. He sought the help of the Bengal Government to enable him to seize the country, destroy the power of the Rohillas and annex it to his dominions. The Company's financial embarrassments were of a serious nature at this time and money was badly needed. At the same time it was necessary to provide for the safety of the

Nawab Vizier's territories partly because he was an ally of the English and partly because the Company desired to protect Bengal against invasion along the western frontier. But the thought uppermost in Hastings, mind was that of finance. Mr. Davies writes :

> "These grim facts could never be forgotten, the country was so ruined by famine and anarchy that its revenues had enormously diminished, the balance sheet showed a large deficit, the public debt amounted to £ 1,500,000, the credit of the Government was exhausted, the treasury contained only 50,000 rupees, the financial remedies that Hastings had applied could only take effect slowly, and the Company was urgently demanding remittances to relieve its own embarrassed finances at home. If ever there was a situation demanding exceptional action, it was surely this; and its pressing urgency goes a long way towards justifying Hastings for the means that he took to extricate his employees from their desperate straits."[1]

The Calcutta Council authorised Hastings to deal with the Vizier as he thought best. He went to Benares where a treaty was signed with the Nawab Vizier on the 7th September 1773. It was an offensive and defensive alliance. The districts of Kara and Allahabad were sold to the Nawab Vizier for a sum of 50 lakhs of rupees and the pension of 26 lakhs given to the Emperor was stopped for he had gone over to the Marathas. A brigade was to be lent to the Vizier and its expenses amounting to Rs. 2,10,000 rupees a month were to be defrayed by him. If the Company required the help of the Vizier's troops, payment will be similarly made.

This arrangement also formed one of the articles of the changes against Hastings. In his speech on Fox's India Bill in December 1783 Burke said:

> "The first potentate sold by the Company for money was the Great Mogul, the descendant of Tamerlane. This high personage, accounted amiable in his manners, respectable for his piety according to his mode, and accomplished in all the oriental literature. All this, and the title, derived under his charter to all that we hold in India, could not save him from the general sale. Money is coined in his name; in his name justice is administered; he is prayed for in every temple through the countries we possess; but he was sold. Two districts Kara and

(1) Administration of Warren Hastings, p. 124.

Allahabad, out of his immense grants, were reserved as a royal demesne to the donor of a Kingdom, and the rightful sovereign of so many nations. After withholding the tribute of £260,000 a year, which the Company was, by the Charter they had received from this Prince under the most solemn obligation to pay, these districts were sold for scarcely two years' purchase. The descendant of Tamerlane now stands in need of almost all the common necessaries of life, and in this situation we do not even allow him as bounty, the smallest portion of what we owe him in justice."

Hastings urged in his defence that the Emperor was now a figurehead and that he had made over the disricts to the Marathas which was contrary to the treaty of Allahabad. It was not possible to take possession of them for it would have aroused the jealousy of the Nawab Vizier and weakened the alliance with him. Hastings was convinced of the justice of the case but a different view is not ruled out by the circumstances in which the transaction was made.

Further negotiations with the Nawab Vizier culminated in treaty regarding the expulsionof the Rohillas from thecountry and its annexation to Oudh. Hastings promised to furnish military aid to the Vizier for a sum of forty lakhs and it was planned that the combined armies should march to conquer Rohilkhand. When he was condemned for his action he defined the object of the expedition in these words:

"Every circumstance that could possibly favour this enterprise, by an uncommon combination of political considerations and fortituons events, operated in support of the measure. Its justice to the Vizier, for the breach of treaty by the Rohilla Chief; 2nd The honour of the Company, pledged implicitly by General Barker, attestation for the accomplishment of this treaty, and which, added to their alliance with the Vizier, and engaged us to see redress obtained for the perfidy of the Rohillas. 3rd. The completion of the line of defence of the Vizier's dominions by extending his boundary on the natural barrier formed by the northern chain of hills and the Ganges, and their junction. 4th The acquisition of forty lakhs of rupees to the Company, and of so much specie added to the exhausted currency of their provinces. 5th The subsidy of 210,000 rupees per month, for defraying the charges of one-third of our army employed with the Vizier. 6th. The urgent and recent orders of the Company for

> rescinding charges, and procuring means to discharge the heavy debt at interest, heightened by the advice of their great distress at home 7th, The absence of the Marathas from Hindustan, which left an open field for carrying the proposed plani into execution. 8th, and lastly. The intensive divisons and disunions in their State, which by engaging them fully at home, would prevent interruptions from their incursions, and leave a moral certainty of success to the enterprise."

Hastings had no disadvantage in concluding such an alliance with the Vizier but he knew that the Directors had strictly ordered him not to employ the Company's troops beyond the limits of the Vizier's territory. They had afterwards permitted him to use his discretion but the orders had not yet arrived. He was obliged to act on his own responsibility and he had decided to help the Vizier.[1]

The Rohillas were asked to pay the stipulated sum of forty lakhs but they again evaded the demand. An English force under Colonel Champion was sent (March 1774) and in the third week of April it entered Rohilkhand together with the army of the Vizier. The combined armies fought on the 23rd April 1774 a battle at Miran Katra in the district of Shahjahanpur. The Rohillas fought bravely but they were overpowered. Hafiz Rahmat died fighting like a warrior and his body was interned with every honour due to his rank and distinction. The campaign resulted in much misery and ruin, about 2,000 men were killed and many leading Chiefs were among the slain. About 20,000 Rohillas were expelled and their country leaving aside the portion assigned to Faizullah Khan, was annexed to Oudh. After the campaign the family of Hafiz Rahmat suffered a great deal. The appeal of the Rohilla Chieftain's widow which Colonel Champion forwarded to Hastings will give the reader some idea of what happened.

"To the English gentlemen, renowned throughout Hindustan for justice, equity, and compassioning the miserable Hafiz Rahmat Khan for forty years governed this country, and the very people who have suffered so much. The will of God is irresistible. He is slain, and to his children not an acreofland, but they are cast from their habitations naked, exposed to the winds, heats and the burning sand and perishing for want of even rice and

(1) In Hastings diary written at Benaras we come acrod the following passage "I acquiesced in his reasons an, expressed may approbation of his (Vizier's) opinion repeating that when I agreed to engage in the Rohilla

water. Yesterday I was mistress of against hundred thousand people, today I am in want even of a cup war of waater, and where I commanded I am a prisoner. Fortune is fickle; she raises the humble and lowers the exalted; but I am innocent, and if any one is guilty it is Hafiz. Butwhy should the children be punished for the errors of their father? I am taken like a beast in a snare without resting place by night; or shade by day'[1]

A treaty was made with Faizullah Khan, the eldest surviving son of Ali Muhammad (October 1774). It was provided that Faizullah Khan should be allowed to possess the territory formerly allotted to him by his father, Ali Muhammad, with the city and district of Rampur. He was to keep in his service a force of not more than 5,000 men and to render military aid to the Vizier whenever necessary. He was not allowed to communicate with any foreign power except the Vizier and the English. After the treaty the allied forces withdrew from the country and Faizullah Khan took quiet possession of the districts assigned to him.

Later Hastings was displeased with the Rohilla Chief for not giving his adequate support against Chet Singh. In 1781 he suggested to the Nawab Vizier the incorporation of Rampur with Oudh. But the Directors disapproved of the plan and Faizullah Khan was allowed to remain in power in Rohilkhand.

The result of the war was as Sir Alfred Lyall observes to complete our defensive position towards the north-west by substituting a suitable and submissiveally for untrustworthy neighbours upon an important section of the barrier and it is certain that the plan succeeded.[2]

But the policy which led to the war was condemned both in India and England. Francis maligned Hastings with his usual bitterness and Burke thundered against him in Parliament and employed all his powers of imagination, and invective in depicting the horrors of the Rohilla war. The main charges were these:

1. The British troops were hired out to the Nawab Vizier against a people who had given no offence to the English.
2. Hastings had done it for filthy lucre.

(1) The Gulshan-i-Rahmat describes the hardships of Hafiz Rahmat's family during and after the compaign.

(2) Rise of British Dominion in India, p. 19.

The Rohillas were a peaceful people and Hafiz Rahmat was a poet renowned throughout the east for his musirical skill.[1]

The earlier Anglo-Indian historians condemned Hastings likewise and described him as "an unscrupluous schemer who had sold also the lives and liberties of a free people for filthy lucre and stood callously by while numberless atrocities were perpetrated". Mill positively asserts that the Vizier's intention was to exterminate the Rohillas and therefore 'every one who bore the name of Rohilla was either butchered or found his safety in flight and exile. Macaulay in a brilliant passage perpetrated the same error and magnified the cruelties practised by the Vizier. He writes:

"Then the horrors of Indian war were let loose on the fair valleys and cities of Rohilkhand. The whole country was in a blaze, More than a hundred thousand people flew from their homes to pestilential jungles. Preferring famine, and fever, and the haunts of tigers, to the tyranny of him to whom an English and a Christian government had, for shameful lucre, sold their substance and their blood, and the honour of their wives and daughters."

On this subject modern opinion has swung round in favour of Hastings. Sir John Strachey who studied the whole question with care, has reached the following conclusions:

1. The policy was based on the necessity of guarding against the reach of ruin to ourselves and our ally.

2. Although we were not a party to the treaty between the Rohillas and the Nawab Vizier, it had been concluded with the strenuous co-operation and advice of our Commander-in-Chief and had been attested by his signature and approved by Govern-supported ment.

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1 This was a mistake. Burke credited him with poetic genius. In his speech on Fox's India Bill in 1783 Burke described him as "the most eminent of the Rohilla Chiefs, one of the bravest men of his time, famous throughout the East for the elegance of his diction and the spirit of his poetical compositions, by which he was given won the name of Hafiz.

There is no doubt that Hafiz Rahmat Khan was an educated man with literary attainments. He was the author of a Persian work on the geneology of the Afghans and his son tells us in the Gulshan-i-Rahmat that at an early age he read the Quran and studied many learned works. He possessed poetic talent also and like other Afghans took delight in song but it was clearly an exaggeration to say that he was a poet renowned throughout the East.

3. It is unfair to apply to Hastings, conduct the rules of international law. These rules imply recipracity and apply to organised states and civilised communities. The Rohillas were not the people to follow these rules.

4. In the opinion of Hastings the conduct of the Rohillas in breaking their treaty with our ally and in carrying on negotiations with the common enemy constituted under provocation and that these can hardly be limited to the case of actual aggression.

5. There is nothing unreasonable in the stipulation that in addition to the actual charges of the English brigade the Vizier should pay forty lakhs to the English on the successful completion of the war. It was fair that the charges of the expedition should fall upon the party which reaped the greater benefit.

It is difficult to agree with all these conclusions. It cannot be denied that the war entailed much misery and suffering. The Vizier's soldiery plundered the population and the English soldiers also shared in the loot. Colonel Champion, who was not satisfied with what they had seized encouraged their predatory instincts and pressed their claim to more money before the Governor-General. Hastings sternly resisted Champion's demand which led the latter to condemn the entire policy of the war. As soon as Hastings learnt of the atrocities of the Vizier, he wrote to Middleton, the British Resident in Oudh, to tell the Vizier that he should not oppress the people whom he had conquered. His remonstrations produced the desired effect. But on enquiry it was found that Champion had greatly exaggerated the misdoings of the Nawab's soldiery.

Yet the policy of the war deserves to be censured. A dispassionate study of records and minutes on the subject does not completely exonerate Hastings from blame. At a certain stage there is evidence to show, he himself wanted to get out of the business and wished to avoid the war. He felt doubts about the correctness of his actions because the expedition was contrary to the orders of the Directors.[1] The Rohillas had given no

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(1) Hastings wrote to Laurence Sulivan in October 1773: I was glad to be freed from the Rohilla expedition because I was doubtful of the judgment which would have been passed upon it at home, where I see too much stress laid upon general maxims and too little attention given to the circumstances which require an exception to be made from them .... in 1772 Gleig 1, p. 356.

offence to the English; they were neither more nor less turbulent than many of the races and tribes that inhabited the country. Their right to occupy Rohilkhand has been questioned but it may be asked with greater reason what right the English had to Bengal and Behar. Their government was efficient and steady and their Chief Hafiz Rahmat was an able leader whose capacity for statesmanship is acknowledged even by Anglo-Indian writers like Sir John Strachey and others. In 1781 the English Resident at Rampur reported that the whole of Rohilkhand was under the government of the Rohillas, a garden without an uncultivated spot. Major Hanny in giving evidence before the Council in 1774 said that the country appeared to be in good cultivation. It is in general one of the best cultivated countries I have ever seen in Hindustan. Forrest, who is no friend of the Rohillas, writes that Hafiz Rahmat was endowed with great personal courage and considerable powers of statesmanship.[1]

It is unfair to say that the account given by Champion of the cruelties of the Vizier is a pure myth. He may have exaggerated but he cannot be held to be guilty of deliberate falsehood in any respect. We cannot wholly dismiss Champion's statements that the Nawab did not cease to over-spread the country with families till three days after the fate of Hafiz Rahmat Khan was decided; that the whole army were witnesses of scenes that cannot be described. That "and I have been obliged to give a deaf ear to the lamentable wails of the widow and fatherless children and to shut my eyes against a wanton display of violence and oppression of inhumanity and cruelty."[2] As compared with the Rohilla Government the State of Oudh was weak, ill-governed and decadent. Besides, the expedition was wrong in principle and it would have been better for Hastings' reputation, if he had avoided it. Even on the ground of expediency it does not admit of justification and Sir Alfred Lyall observes:

> "Nevertheless this advantage was gained by an unprovoked aggression upon the Rohillas, who sought no quarrel with us and with whom we had been on not unfriendly terms; nor is Warren Hastings' policy in this matter easily justifiable even upon the elastic principle that enjoins the governor of a distant dependancy to prefer above all other considerations the security of the territory entrusted to him."[3]

(1) Administration of Warren Hastings, p. 51.

(2) Cambridge, History of India, p. 223.

(3) Rise of British Dominion in India, p. 189.

Much was made of Barker's part in the treaty. He had merely attested the signatures and there is no evidence to show that he had guaranteed the observance of the terms by the parties. Mr. Roberts rightly says that even if we assume that the General had pledged the British to the fulfilment of the treaty, such a drastic method was not necessary for bringing about the designed result. The financial aspect of the matter cannot be ignored. Hastings himself admitted that money was his chief motive and this is confirmed by the verdict of the majority of his council.

The expectation in sharing the fall of a people who have given us no cause of quarrel whatsoever, is plainly avoided to be a motive for invading them.[1]

But one thing must be said in favour of Hastings. Few statesmen in the eighteenth century which in any way jeopardised the security of their dominion. The history of Empire in the eighteenth century furnishes several instances of unprovoked aggression and of violation of the rules of international law and morality.

(1) Cambridge, History of India p. 322.

CHAPTER IX

Warren Hastings as Governor-General
(1774-86)

Parliamentary Enquiry

It has been said in a previous chapter that the affairs of the East India Company since 1765 had been in a state of disorder. The anomaly of the position occupied by the Company in India had long been clear to those who took interest in its affairs both in India and England. The Company was no longer a trading concern; it had acquired possession of vast territories and although they were held from the Mughal Emperor the need was felt for doing something 'to reconcile our quasi-sovereignty in India with a proper subordination to the Crown and Parliament'. It was against the English constitutional practice to allow the Company complete freedom of action without any check or control over its affairs. It was just and proper that Parliament should intervene to regulate its responsibilities. At the same time it was wholly impossible to take away the rights and privileges granted by a Royal Charter. The wealthy Nabobs[1] who returned from India with ill-gotten wealth aroused the jealousy as well as he indignation of Englishmen and the Company's affairs attracted more and more attention. In 1766 the House of Commons appointed a Committee to enquire into the affairs of the East India Company and a year later Parliament definitely asserted its right to control the Company's financial policy. An Act was passed which laid down that dividends should be voted by ballot only at general meetings and the maximum dividend was fixed at 10 per cent. The position, however, continued to be unsatisfactory and in 1769 Verelst, who was Governor of Bengal wrote:—

"Experience must convince even the most prejudiced that to hold vast possessions and yet to act on the level of mere

1. These were the servants of the Company who had amassed large fortunes in India. They were regarded by their countrymen as men who had fattened on the miseries of their fellow creatures.

merchants, making gain over first principal; to receive an immense revenue without possessing an adequate power over the people who pay it; to be really interested in the grand and generous object—the good of the whole and yet to pursue a narrow and partial end, are paradoxes not to be reconciled and highly injurious to our national character, dangerous to the best establishment, and bordering on inhumanity."[1]

In 1769 an Act was passed which required the Company to pay to the Exchequer annually a sum of £ 4,00,000 for the year in lieu of the privilege of retaining the territorial acquisitions. There were other provisions which were to regulate the dividend. The question of sovereignty was not discussed but by this interference the State clearly asserted its rights to control the sovereignty of Indiān territories, and to have a share in the gains of the Company. Clive who knew of the financial difficulties of the Company did not approve of this measure and condemned it as a 'political blackmail.' Other friends of the Company thought likewise and failed to understand why the Company should pay such a large amount to the British Crown for lands which it held from the Great Mughal. But the feeling against the Company was strong and the public mind was much agitated over the gigantic fortunes that were made by the 'Indian Nabobs'. As long as the Whigs were in power, the Company was safe and the small minority which was in favour of drastic measures was helpless. But when the Tories came into power under the leadership of Lord North the situation was changed. The bankruptcy of the Company at this time aggravated the crisis and took public opinion by surprise.' Mr. Davies sums up the position of the Company thus:—

"The Directors, in desperation, applied to the Bank of England for a loan of £ 6,00,000. It was refused. Panic-stricken and foreseeing ruin, they and their friends began frantically to unload their stock. Then, when it was announced that the Company was unable to meet its obligation to the State, the crash came. Wails and curses went up from the stricken investors. Many members of Parliament and their friends lost heavily. Excration was poured upon the Company and cries for vengeance were heard on every hand. All ranks in the State would benefit by the downfall of the Company."[2]

1. Fifth Report, East India Affairs, Vol. I, p. CCX.
2. Administration of Warren Hastings, p. 135.

The Company applied to the Government for help. Lord North, who commanded large majorities in both Houses, had a great dislike for the Company and he referred the application to Parliament.

Between 1757 and 1766 the leading servants of the Company in Bengal alone had received presents amounting to £ 21,69,665 besides Clive's Jagir, the capitalised value of which was £ 6,00, 000. In addition to these they had recived £ 37,70,830 as compensation for the losses. Truly the administraton of the Company was a sink of dishonesty and corruption.

In 1772 through the Deputy Chairman Sulivan the Directors tried to obtain lease to introduce a bill for the better regulation of their affairs but it was refused. In April Burgoyne moved a resolution in the House of Commons to appoint a Select Committee of 31 to enquire into the affairs of the East India Company. The Company, hard-pressed for money, asked the Government for a loan £ 10,00,000. This created a storm of opposition. In March they had declared a dividend of 12½ per cent; in August they had come to the Government as suppliants for a large loan. The opponents of the Company got their long desired opportunity. The reports of the misdeeds of the Company's servants further inflamed resentment against it and the servants of the Company were condemned with equal impartiality. Lord North proposed a Select Committee for looking into the Indian affairs. The Select Committee's report revealed a scandalous state of affairs. Its Chairman Burgoyne said: The most atrocious abuses that ever stained the name of Government call for redress............If by some means sovereignty and land are not separated from trade, India and Great Britain will be sunk and overwhelmed never to rise again. Horace Walpole recorded the popular impression in these words :

> "Such a scene of tyranny and plunder has been opened up as makes one shudder...... ...We are spaniards in our lust for gold, and Dutch in our delicacy of obtaining it."

Chaltham burst into indignation as he heard of the doings of the Company and wrote in 1773: 'India teems with iniquities so rank, as to smell to earth and heaven'. The Directors were to blame. They had encouraged most of the iniquities and their love of money had led to all kinds of vices.

Under the full blaze of Parliamentary and public wrath, the Company made frantic efforts to reform the abuses. Six supervisors were appointed with salaries of £ 10,000 each to go to India to reorganize the whole system. But this move was disallowed

by Parliament in December 1772. In March the Company again requested the Government . for a loan of £ 15,00,000. Burgoyne again launched an attack in the Commons and on his motion a resolution was adopted. 'That all acquisitions made under the influence of a military force, or by treaty with foreign princes, do of right belong to the State.' This resolution affirmed the sovereignty of the British Parliament over the territorial possessions acquired in the East. Two Acts were passed in 1773. By one of them ministers were permitted to grant to the Company a loan of £ 14,00,000 to meet their obligations. The other was the Regulating Act which made important changes not only in the constitution of the Company but also in its relations to the Crown and in the Government of India. For the first time the Parliament tried to give a regular shape to the Company's administration in India and to make it subject to the Crown and Parliament.

The Regulating Act

The Regulating Act passed by Lord North's Ministry marks the first attempt of the British Parliament to establish efficient Government in India. It overhauled the constitution of the Company at home and all objections raised by its friends and supporters were overruled. The Directors were henceforth to hold office for four years and one-fourth of their number was to retire annually. A year's gap was necessary to make a retiring Director eligible for re-election. The qualification for a vote in the Court of Proprietors was raised from £ 500 to £ 1,000 and it was confined to those who held their stock at least for a year.

In India the Governor of Bengal became the Governor-General of India for five years having full authority over the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay which were forbidden to make war or peace without the consent of the Governor-General and his Council. The Governor-General was to be assisted by a Council consisting of four members, each having equal voting power with the Governor-General except in a case of a tie when the latter could exercise a casting vote. The first Councillors were named in the Act and were to hold office for four years and vacancies were to be filled up by the Court of Directors. The scale of salaries sanctioned was fairly high, the Governor-General was to get £ 25,000 a year and each of the Councillors £ 10,000. The Directors were required to lay before the treasury all correspondence from India relating to revenue affairs and to inform a Secretary of State of everything about the Council and military administration. By this Act was established at Calcutta a Supreme Court of Judicature which was to work independently of the Governor-General and his Council and was to consist of

four English Judges who were to administer English law to all British subjects. The right of appeal to the Privy Council was granted. Sir Elijah Impey was to act as the Chief Justice and his salary was fixed at £ 8,000 a year. The jurisdiction of the Court was very wide. It extended to all sorts of causes—Civil, Criminal, Admiralty and Ecclesiastical-and over the whole province of Bengal, Behar and Orissa. Juries consisting of Britishers, were to be employed in criminal trials and the Court was a court of record as well as of jail delivery. All servants of the Company including the Governor-General, the members of Council and the Judges were forbidden to accept presents or to engage in trade. Trade in certain specified articles was allowed to some of the Company's servants but for engaging in trade not so specified, a license had to be taken. Several penalties were provided for breach of trust and misconduct by the Company' servants. It was further laid down that the authorities set up by the Act will communicate to the Home Government the details regarding the revenue and the administration of Bengal.

The Regulating Act was a clumsy device to establish a strong and stable government in a foreign country. In the India of the eighteenth century it was necessary to establish a local authority armed with well-defined powers, and in all cases to invest some person with authority to take decisions on his own responsibility, in emergencies. By this enactment the chief authoriry in British India was vested in a Governor-General and his Council. The Governor-General had no right to override the will of majority. The result of this was so serious that it was applied to. . . Cornwallis in 1786. At the meetings of the Council every point was likely to be argued and debated and no provison made for securing unity of action and prompt despatch of business. The Governor-General had only a casting vote in a case of equal division and as we shall see he often avoided difficult situations by exercising it. No better means could have been adopted by the framers of the Act to ensure 'futile debates and fatal delays'. The clause giving the Governor—General powers of supervision over the Presidencies did not work well. The subordinate governments could not make waror peace without the previous consent of the Governor-General but there were two exceptions to this rule. The local government could take action on its own responsibility when it judged the matter to be urgent and when it had obtained special sanction from the authorities at home. This was probably done with a view to enable the local governments which had so far acted independently to get used to the control of the Governor-General.

The relations between the Supreme Court and the Council were not defined. A clash of jurisdictions was inevitable. The

Court was given extensive authority over British subjects residing in Bengal, Behar and Orissa but its jurisdiction was not clearly defined. The term British subject was vague; it might apply only to Europeans. At or it might be interpreted to apply to Europeans and Indians both. In practice it was difficult to distinguish between an inhabitant of the country who was under the protections of the Company and one who was not. Again it was not clear what law-English or Indian-the Judges were going to administer. In the hands of men, whollyi gnorant of Indian customs and usages, the English law was to become an instrument of injustice to the people.[1]

Mr. Davies rightly observes :

> "The only law that the four selected barristers knew was the English law, and all of them were equally ignorant of Indian conditions. The way was thus clearly prepared for a conflict between the execution and the judicial branches of the new Government."[2]

The Supreme Court was empowered to take cognisance of all cases. This was again vague. It was not clear whether the Company's servants engaged in the collection of the revenue were exempted from the jurisdiction of this Court. The Council and the Court differed on this question and soon embarked upon a most undignified controversy. The people suffered much and Sir Alfred Lyall's remarks are well worth quoting :

> "With a prolix and costly procedure, with strange unintelligible powers resembling the attributes of some mysterious divinity, the Supreme Court was soon regarded by the natives as an engine of outlandish oppression rather than as a bulwark against executive tyranny."[3]

The Company's servants were forbidden to engage in trade but the Directors had never realised the necessity of increasing their salaries. It was not possible to prevent them from eking

1. Sir Courtney Ilbert describes the English law which the Judges were going to administer in these words:—

   "the unregenerate English law, insular, technical, formless, tempered in its application to English circumstances by the quibbles of Judges and the obstinacy of juries, capable of being an instrument of the most monstrous injustice when administered in an atmosphere different from that in which it had been administered."

2. Administration of Warren Hastings, p. 141.
3. The Rise and Expansion of British Dominion in Indian, p. 181.

out their slender incomes in other ways so long as their salaries were wretchedly low.

The Act provoked much hostile comment at the time when it was passed. Leaving aside the remarks of partisans, there is one conclusion which cannot be resisted. It was based on a complete ignorance of Indian conditions and no person of Indian experience except Clive was consulted in drafting it. The Ministers had no knowledge of the country or of its needs and the suggestion is not wholly unfounded that they were more anxious to have a share in the patronage of India than to establish a sound and workable administration. The principal target of attack was the Company and they had not the least hesitation in curtailing or usurping its rights. Sir James Stephen says that the drafters of the Act did not wish to face the problem with which they had to deal. This is not quite correct. The Act brought about a change in the personnel of the Governor-General's Council by which the actions of the Company's servants were to be judged. Secondly, it attempted to introduce regular principles of law and justice in India, although they were not in consonance with the genius of her people, and to reform the Company's services. Thirdly, it appointed an experienced person as Governor-General of India who had steered the ship of State past all rocks and shoals and laid solidly the foundations of the British Empire in India. It may not be flattering to our pride to state these facts but the success of Hastings and his contemporaries is the measure of the political incapacity of our own countrymen of the eighteenth century.

Though some critics will strongly differ, it may be said that the Act was on the whole an honest attempt to deal with a difficult problem. It was the first attempt to bring the Company under the control of the British Parliament and to establish an efficient administration.

The members of the first Council were named in the Act itself. They were, Major General Clavering, Barwell, Colonel Monson and Mr. Philip Francis. Barwell was already in Calcutta and the other three had come from England. General Clavering was made also the Commander-in-Chief of the forces and senior member of the Council with the right of succession to the post of Governor-General in case of vacancy. The Judges of the Supreme Court were Sir Robert Chambers, John Hyde and Stephen Lemaistre as puisne Judges and Sir Elijah Impey, who was a school fellow of Hastings, was appointed Chief Justice.

The new Councillors reached Calcutta on 19th October, 1774, the Judges having arrived two days earlier. The new constitution

began to function from the 20th October and with the inauguration began a bitter struggle between Warren Hastings and his colleagues which taxed all his resources of intellect and character. The Councillors with the exception of Philip Francis were men of ordinary abilities; he had received an excellent education and was well read in classics, political philosophy, and economics and had made a special study of the law of Constitution. He was a brilliant orator, and made his opponents writhe under the fire of his eloquence, irony, invective and satire. For long, he was credited with the authorship of the famous letters of Junius which poured condemnation on the methods and policy of George III and Lord North. Though some scholars have now identified Junius with Lord Temple the question has not been fully settled and there are many who still regard Francis as the author of the famous letters. It was probably because of his talents that he was appointed to this high post. According to Burke he was a man of 'some personal character' and there is evidence to show that he was a man and not destitute of real patriotism and magnanimity. He had heard a good deal about the abuses of Government in India and his soul was fired with the desire to set things right. With a rare industry he devoted himself to the study of the condition of the Company's indiscipline in India in its various branches and resolved to sweep away all corruption and evil and establish the Empire of Britain on moral and stronger foundations. It was a laudable aim but unfortunately Francis' judgment was warped by passion and prejudice and there was in his nature an element of malignancy which made him relentlessly furious against those whom he regarded as his opponents.

From the very outset he determined to show no quarter to the authors of administrative abuses in India. In the Council he won over Clavering and Monson to his side and this created a permanent hostile majority against the Governor-General. They felt no respect for their Chief. Indeed, there was some justification for doing so, and they cast aside all constitutional propriety in charging him with the greatest misdemeanour.

Forthwith, they launched their crusade against Hastings. Francis, from across the table, poured his venom on the Governor-General and opposed, criticised, and condemned with much eloquence, subtlety and delectual skill his administrative acts and denounced them in unmeasured terms. Among the many points of attack there are three that deserve to be specially mentioned-the sale of Allahabad and Kara to the Nawab Vizier, the Rohilla war and the new regulations about the management of revenue. They thought that by exposing the iniquity of Hastings' foreign policy which was the exclusive domain of the Governor-General

they would draw upon his head the wrath of the Court of Directors and ultimately dispossess him of his high office. They asked the Governor-General to lay before them the correspondence of Middleton, the British Agent and the Vizier's Court, and when Hastings put forward the plea that much of it was of a private nature, they hurled at him the accusation that he withheld it because it contained evidence of his corruption. They charged him with pecuniary gains for himself. They ordered the recall of Middleton, withdrew the British Brigade from the Vizier's sentries and appointed Brislow, a friend of Philip Francis, as their agent at the Oudh Court. Hastings' protests were unheeded. Then they proceeded to condemn the Rohilla war and described Hastings as an accomplice in the Vizier's activities. Their letters and dispatches to England were full of the most malicious accusations against the Governor—General. Hastings in self defelance deputed Maclene, an officer of the Bengal army to act as agent for him in London, to guard his interests.

Not content with this, the majority entered into a new agreement with Asafudowlah, the new Vizier who had succeeded his father in January 1775. The treaty of Benares was cancelled and he was asked to cede Benares and Ghazipur with all their revenues amounting to 22 lakhs and to increase the subsidy by 50,000 rupees. Hastings and Barwell pointed out the injustice of these arrangements but they turned a deaf ear to their protests. The results of the new treaty are very well described by Mr. Davies:

> "It did far more than weaken Oude ; it bankrupted and ruined her. For the Vizier's government, crippled by the rape of one of its richest provinces and saddled with an increased military subsidy, was to prove quite unable to meet its obligations, and it was not long before Oude sank into a state of collapse and anarchy from which it was never to rise again. The shadows of annexation had begun inexorably to close round the wretched country."[1]

Francis satisfied his conscience by thinking that the arrangement was in the highest degree advantageous and honourable to the Company.

Hastings was now in an unenviable position. His colleagues had everything in their power to deal a crushing blow to his prestige and the impression began to gain ground that they were more powerful than the Governor-General, and encouraged

1. Administration of Warren Hastings, p. 165.

espionage of the worst kind and began to lend a willing ear to all kinds of charges against him. Not only were his public acts condemned but his personal character was also impugned. All persons with grievances, real or imaginary, were easily granted interview and allowed to unfold their tale of rapacity, oppression and intrigue.

Francis who dipped his pen in gall, wrote bitterly to the Directors and told them that the Governor-General had always acted contrary to their orders and nothing short of his recall would save the situation in India.

It is interesting to read Hastings' account of the work of the majority which troubled him so much. In a letter to Sulivan in 1776 he wrote :

> "The present government has proceeded on principles diametrically opposite to mine.
>
> First they have broken all the arrangements which I made in the Nawab's family in 1772 ; replaced Mahomed Reza Khan; restored the office of Naib Suba; dismissed the Begum from her office ....publicly proclaimed the Nawab's sovereignty, they have made their power uncontrolled, and contrived to preclude its operations from public view, by the pretended independency granted to Mahomed Reza Khan.
>
> Secondly, they have abolished, or rendered of no effect, all the courts of justice, and avowed their intentions of restoring the col lectorships.
>
> Thirdly, they complain against me for overcharging the revenue.
>
> Fourthly, they have branded the suspension of the King's tribute with the appellation of violation of public faith; they have called the cession of Kara the sale of other's property ; they have called the subsidy which I had fixed with the Vizier at 2,10,000 rupees and which they had augmented to 2,60,000 rupees and the stipulation for the Rohilla war, the mercenary prostitution of the company's arms for hire...........
>
> The Nawab's finances and resources are totally exhausted. His troops are disaffected to a man. They have been permitted to oppose his authority in instances of the most criminal disobedience, and the only severity which has been ever exercised towards them was in the massacre of 20,000 of his sepoys (at least Bristow computes the loss at that amount) mutinied for their pay."[1]

1. Gleig, II, p. 30.

Trial of Nand Kumar

The Councillors had created an atmosphere in which any charge could be preferred against the Governor-General. Francis who had allowed his suspicions to turn into convictions afforded every encouragement to complainants. The most important of them was Maharaja Nand Kumar, a Bengali Brahman of high rank now nearly 70 years of age who was formerly employed in the household of Mir Jafar at Murshidabad. The relations between him and Hastings were strained. Both hated each other. Nand Kumar felt much mortified by Mahomed Reza Khan's trial and resented the treatment meted out to him by Hastings. Mahomed Reza was discharged and the enquiry was dropped by Hastings. Shitab Roy was reinstated in office. He accused before the Council the Governor—General of having accepted a bribe of 3½ lakhs from Munni Begam, the widow of Mir Jafar and Raja Gur Das, Nand Kumar's son, for securing to them the posts of Regent and Dewan respectively in the Nawab's household. Hastings objected to the procedure and said that the Council could not sit in judgment on him and had no right to examine Nand Kumar at the Council Board. It would have been better to appoint a committee of enquiry to look into their charges but to permit Nand Kumar to arraign the Governor-General before the Council was certainly an infringement of the dignity and character of the first member of the administration. When the majority insisted upon continuing the proceedings, Hastings dissolved the Council and this had to be done more than once. Mahomed Reza Khan was also approached and asked to make a charge against Hastings but he could say nothing more than that he had presented only a Persian Cat to the Governor-General. They paid a visit to Nand Kumar at his house with great pomp and if Barwell is to be trusted the Raja never had such honours paid to him. In the eyes of the members who had elicited much damaging information from Nand Kumar without making a scrutiny into the discrepancies in his statements, the charge of bribe was fully made out and they called upon the Governor-General to pay back the sums he had received into the public treasury. Hastings refused to recognize the Council's right to impeach him in this manner and there can be no doubt about the constitutional impropriety of holding a trial of the President in such a manner. Hastings admitted that

1. The first charge of bribery was brought by the Rani of Burdwan but her complaints were directed against Graham with whom Hastings made common cause for the purpose of defeating the Rani's attempts. Nand Kumar was the first who made a direct attack upon the Governor-General.

he had received 1½ lakhs from Munni Begum to whom he paid a visit at Murshidabad as the customary 'entertainment allowance' which had been paid to the Governors in the past. Clive and Verelst had been paid some allowance when they were governors. This was proved by entries in the book of public accounts kept at Murshidabad. Customary or not it was undoubtedly excessive and in all conscience unjustifiable especially when it is remembered that the Nawab's allowance had been cut down to 16 lakhs a year, Hastings was right in protesting against the high-handedness of his colleagues but he committed a 'tactical blunder' in not admitting the receipt of 1½ lakhs. The reason why he did not do so is obvious.

As the reports of their proceedings became known to the public attacks on Hastings' personal character and integrity multiplied. New charges were brought against him and he was painted in vivid colours as a monster of iniquity. Small faults were magnified into grave offences and he found himself in a state of torment. It was at this time that he was informed of a conspiracy between Nand Kumar, Francis, Fowller and Joseph, an Englishman not in the Company's service, to bring a false charge against him. The matter reported was to the Chief Justice who ordered his trial on the charge of conspiracy but before this was done Nand Kumar was caught in a trap which his enemies had laid for him.

A certain Mohan Prasad had six years before brought against Nand Kumar a civil suit for fraud in the Mayor's Court but having failed there, he went to the Supreme Court and prosecuted him for forgery in a will.[1] He was committed to prison and ordered to take his trial. The Judges found him guilty and he was hanged on 5th August, 1775. The evidence against him was so meagre that even a *prima facie* clase could not be established. But it is said the Judges were greatly annoyed at the zeal of the prisoner's friends and the perjury of his witnesses. The trial was held with the help of a jury which consisted entirely of Europeans. It lasted for seven days and the formalities of law were fully complied with. The accused was defended by Farrier, one of the ablest advocates of the Calcutta court. Before the execution of the sentence Nand Kumar prayed for mercy but his petition met with no response. The request for appeal to the King in Council was rejected on the ground that it contained no specific grounds. Then Farrier made a fresh petition

1. Mohan Prasad was attorney to a banker Balak Das whose will Nand Kumar had been found guilty of uttering knowing it to be forged. This will had been made four years before.

praying for respite but only one jury-man agreed to sign it. Undeterred by failure he requested the members of the Council to endorse his petition but Clavering and Monson refused to interfere on the ground that 'it had no relation whatever to the public concerns of the country'. A piteous appeal made to Francis previously produced no effect and he did nothing to save the life of the man whom he had instigated so much. Perhaps as some Anglo-Indian writers suggest Francis felt that Nand Kumar dead would be more useful for his purposes than Nand Kumar alive. Before the execution of sentence Nand Kumar prayed for mercy but his petition met with no response.

Thus was removed from the path of Hastings one of his most formidable enemies whose intrigues threatened to blight his career in India. He heaved a sigh of relief when the trial was over and wrote to his agents in London "the old gentleman was in gaol and in a fair way to be hanged". The Chief Justice also feared that his motives might be impugned and three days after he wrote to Alexander Elliot that he was apprehensive the majority of this Council will endeavour to assign undue motives for the late execution. . . I would by no means leave my attachment to Hastings if he be decried or extenuated. It was founded on friendship for a school fellow and has been confirmed by opinion of the man.[1]

The death of a Brahmin of high rank caused consternation among the people. Thousands rushed to the Ganges to have a dip in the sacred water to wash away the pollution caused by witnessing the murder and prayed for the welfare of his soul. The execution had a calming effect on accusers and informers and even the hostile majority of the Council was sobered down by the suddeness of the blow.

The execution of Nand Kumar like the Rohilla war formed one of the articles of impeachment against Hastings. Burke thundered in fury against him and charged him with the murder of a pious Brahman. He was in close touch with Francis who supplied him information about Hastings' conduct and policy.

Speaking on Fox's India Bill he said:

> "The Rajah Nuncomar was, by an insult on everything which India holds respectable and sacred, hanged in the face of all his nation, by the Judges you sent to protect that people, hanged for a pretended crime, upon an *ex post facto* Act of Parliament, in the midst of his evidence against Mr. Hastings. The accuser they said

1. Davies, Administration of Warren Hastings, p. 177

> be hanged. The culprit, without acquittal or enquiry triumphs on the ground of that murder—a murder not of Noncomar only, but of all living testimony, and even of evidence yet unborn. From that time not a complaint has been heard from the Natives against their Governors. All the grievances of India have found a complete remedy."

Mill and Macaulay among historians accepted Burke's charge and the latter went so far as to assert that 'None but idiots or biographers will doubt that Hastings and Impey had colluded to bring about the judicial murder of Nand Kumar'. It was believed by many that ostensibly Nand Kumar was hanged for forgery but in reality because he had the audacity to accuse the Governor-General of grave offences. There are three questions that arise out of the trial. First, was Nand Kumar guilty? Second, was the trial fairly conducted? Third, did Hastings collude with Impey to bring about his murder by a legal process? The answer given by a number of modern Anglo-Indian critics is extremely in favour of Hastings.

Forrest regards Hastings' prosecution of Nand Kumar for conspiracy as an act of legitimate self-defence and says that there was possibility for his death rested not on Hastings but on the three members of Council (Adm. 140-141). Vincent Smith who is strongly biassed in favour of Hastings writes:

> There is not the slightest foundation for Macaulay's denunciations of the couduct of either Hastings or Impey in connection with the execution of Nand Kumar. The critics of Warren Hastings may make out a case against him in regard to the Rohilla war, Raja Chet Singh, or the Begams of Oudh. The facts of all those cases admit of divergence of opinion concerning his action, but nobody who has really understood the Nand Kumar affair can believe it possible that a judicial murder was committed. The procedure was regular, legal, and deliberate, and the actual trial by jury was more laborious, and exhausting, probably, than that of any other case on record.

Modern research regards the story of the judicial murder as a myth. Sir James Stephen in his 'The Story of Nuncomar and the Impeachment of Sir Elijah Impey' which is a wholly one-sided statement of the case defends Warren Hastings' conduct and holds Nand Kumar to have been justly and fairly tried and punished. Mr. Davies, a recent defender of Warren Hastings, expresses a similar view (176-79). In a style hardly suited to the dispassionate examination of a controversial question he writes:

1. Oxford History p. 527.

The idea of Hastings, desperate because his career and reputation were about to be ruined, trying to destroy his enemy and accuser before he was destroyed by him, framing the prosecution on a capital charge, and persuading his old school friend to save him by sending Nand Kumar to the gallows—What is this but the very stuff of great drama ? How alluring it is ! How irresistible to the lovers of the stage ? How artistically satisfying ?[1]

A more balanced view is expressed by Mr. Roberts whose researches deserve to be treated with respect. He regards the charge of judicial murder as baseless but frankly states that the trial was not conducted with absolute fairness and it was unfortunate that the judges themselves cross-examined, and that somewhat severely, the prisoner's witnesses, on the alleged ground that counsel for the prosecution was incompetent. He goes to add that the judicial murder may be fictitious but there was 'certainly something equivalent to a miscarriage of justice'. The judges acted wrongly in applying the English Law to Nand Kumar's case and as even Sir James Stephen admits fine or imprisonment would have been the appropriate penalty.[2] One mere extract will show Mr. Roberts' fairmindedness.

It is very doubtful whether the Supreme Court had any jurisdiction over natives, and there is practically no doubt at all (though the point has been contested) that the English law making forgery a capital crime was not operated in India till many years after Nand Kumar's alleged forgery had been committed. Apart from all this, the Supreme Court had authority to reprieve and suspend the execution of any capital sentence whenever there shall appear in their judgment a proper occasion for mercy.[3]

Mr. Roberts finds it difficult to understand why the majority of the Council did not try to save Nand Kumar. There was good reason why they should have petitioned the Court for his release. If Nand Kumar were hanged it will be difficult to investigate the charge against Hastings. According to Mr. Roberts the only thing that will explain their conduct is that they had come to regard the charges against Hastings as baseless and were glad to be rid of Nand Kumar. The reader who has

1. Davies, Administration p. 179.
   On reading Mr. Davies's Defence of Hastings one feels convinced of the necessity of the warning which Macaulay gives to idiots and biographers.
2. History of British India, p. 188.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 188-89.

followed the history of these events will form his own judgment about the character of Hastings as well as the members of the Council. Both had used Nand Kumar as their tool and such was their gratefulness for the services rendered. Both had shown their gratefulness by throwing him overboard.[1]

Thompson and Garrett have examined Nand Kumar's case with more fervour and impartiality than other Anglo-Indian writers. They have expressed the view that the trial was not so impartial as Stephen and Vincent Smith assert, nor was the British jury the best to hear such a case. The application of the English law was bad enough and it was clearly unfair because Nand Kumar's alleged guilt went back to a period four years before the establishment of the Supreme Court.[2] The learned authors write:

> "Hanging was certainly a pitiful end for the men who, when the English were suppliants and merchants deserving precious little respect for either character or courage, was a great officer in the land, and who had been in so many prime affairs of State during twenty years."[3]

Another Anglo-Indian writer of repute who has made a similar study of the whole question is Sir William Beveridge. His well known book "The trial of Maharaja Nand Kumar' was written as a reply to Sir James Stephen's work on the same subject which has been mentioned before. His conclusions are entirely different. They may be briefly stated as follows:

> The charge of forgery was not established and the real prosecutor of Nuncomar was Hastings. Kamaluddin, the principal witness in the case, was closely connected with Hastings' Banya Kamta Babu. The trial was conducted unfairly and the Chief Justice's behaviour was bad throughout. There is Farrier's account to show that from the very beginning the judges had made up their minds that the defence was false. The British jury which tried the case was incompetent and Impey hanged Nand Kumar from corrupt motives. This is the sum and substance of Beveridge's learned thesis

1. "Morison and Francis did nothing, a baseness deeper than that which Hastings showed when his private secretary interfered against a reprieve."

   Thompson and Garrett, Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India, pp. 138-39.
2. Thompson and Garrett, p. 138.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 138.

which runs into three hundred and thirty-seven pages crammed with information on every conceivable aspect of the case.

There is no doubt that much bias has been imported into the discussion of this question by Anglo-Indian writers. Some are apologists of Hastings, others are mere critics of his nature and policy and more reasonable in their outbreak. An impartial study, however, of the whole question leads to this conclusion. The prosecution failed to prove that Nand Kumar was guilty of forgery. Even Sir James Stephen admits that the case against him was a weak one and the evidence was hardly sufficient to establish a *prima facie* case. That the defence was false does not prove the guilt of the accused. The principal witness for the prosecution Kamaluddin was a man of worthless character who, according to Sir James Stephen, 'considered falsehood as fair play'. Hastings was interested in the prosecution. The coincidence between Nand Kumar's accusation against Hastings and his arrest for forgery is not merely a matter of chance. It is on record that Farrier's (Nand Kumar's Counsel) attempts to obtain a reprieve for Nand Kumar were foiled by Hastings' servants. According to the Sair-ul-Mutakharin it was the impression of contemporaries that Nand Kumar perished for having accused the Governor-General. General Clavering wrote on the 15th September, 1775:

> "..............and after the death of Nand Kumar, the Governor we believe is well assured and that no man who regards his own safety will venture to stand forth as his accuser."

The charges against Hastings were still under examination and the best way to stifle enquiry was to create trouble for Nand Kumar. The forgery (if committed at all) was committed several years ago and during the interval Hastings had used Nand Kumar as his tool for his own purposes.[1] That the prosecution was launched after Nand Kumar had arraigned the Governor-General is significant.

The trial began in June and the judges must have been inconvenienced by the tropical heat but it cannot be said that the trial was conducted fairly. Impey's manner was bad; Hyde and Le Maistre (two other judges) treated the defence witnesses very

1. Hastings was accused in March; the conspiracy charge against Nand Kumar was brought in April and on the 6th May, Nand Kumar was arrested on a charge of forgery. The interval was very short and when we remember that Mohan Prasad was in touch with Hastings it seems reasonable to believe that the two were connected.

roughly and even Farrier was hampered in his advocacy of the cause of his client. He was not allowed to address the jury. The judge's questions to the witnesses were of 'an inquisitional character' and Farrier stated before the House of Commons that they were influenced by the perjury of the defence witnesses. Impey's charge to the jury was unfair. The jurors were not men of substance and there was not one Indian among them. Nand Kumar's request to be tried by a jury of his peers was refused. Hastings' contemporaries had no doubt that he had countenanced the prosecution of Nand Kumar and some of them asked him to take precautions for his safety. Macpherson wrote to him from Madras:

> "Do not employ any black; let your fair female (Mrs. Imhoff) friend oversee everything you eat."

Hastings feared danger and took precautions to guard his person.

Impey and his colleagues tried Nand Kumar according to English Law which was wholly unjust. It is difficult to follow the reasoning which Impey employed to prove that the English Law applied to Calcutta. It is true, forgery was a capital offence in England but in India it was a mere misdemeanour. There was only one case of an Indian sentenced to death for forgery (1765) but he was not hanged and the sentence was condemned. The judges knew nothing about Indian customs and usages and their action justified Hastings' forebodings about applying an exotic law to India. Probably Impey was convinced of Nand Kumar's guilt but his fault consists in the haste, partiality and prejudice with which he tried the case.

He forgot that Clive had committed forgery but Parliament had passed a resolution eulogising his services to the country. Martin's words may be noted:

> "The offence which had not barred an Englishman's path to a peerage was now to doom a Hindu to the gallows".[1]

Impey was not an impartial judge. Lord Cornwallis wrote in 1786 two years after he left India that he might not be sent again and all sections of the population endorsed his view. Again in 1783 he observed that he was sorry for Hastings, but that if they wanted somebody to hang, they might 'tuck up' Sir Elijah Impey without giving anybody the smallest concern.[2]

1. The Indian Empire, III, p. 334.
2. Impey's character did not inspire confidence. He had a passion for money and it is said he procured contracts in

Such is independent testimony about the Chief Justice who is credited with a high sense of judicial fairness and integrity.

There is reason to think that the judge did not act from corrupt motives but it is true that Hastings heaved a sigh of relief at the fall of his detested enemy. He wrote to one of his friends that his honour, life and position had been saved. Although some writers have interpreted these words in a different sense, it is clear that they referred to Nand Kumar's case. Just before this Hastings had written to his agents in London giving them discretionary power to tender his resignation, which was cancelled later. The death of Nand Kumar proved favourable to Hastings. Had he not been guilty of the charges brought by Nand Kumar, he would have categorically denied them but he did not do so. Again, if he really cared to clear his conduct, he would have exerted his influence with Mohan Prasad, with whom he was in touch, to suspend the prosecution for forgery until the charges against him had been fully investigated. It was clearly the duty of first man in the administration to rebut the charges brought against him.

The quarrel with Council continued. The majority now tried to undo the work of Hastings. They removed Munni Begam from the post of guardian and appointed Raja Gur Das in her place. Mohomed Reza Khan was restored to favour again and was placed in charge of criminal justice. The majority spent all their time in condemning Hastings and the administration came to a standstill. The machinery provided to maintain law and order became weak and crime increased. Not satisfied with setting at naught Hastings' authority they entered into a quarrel with the Supreme Court of which an account will be given later. Owing to the high-handedness of the majority, the condition of Oudh grew from bad to worse, and Hastings' prophesies about the treaty of Faizabad were fully proved. In September, 1776, Monson died and this entitled him to make an effective use of his casting vote. While affairs were in this condition, the resignation of Hastings caused a difficult situation. Exasperated by the persistent opposition of his colleagues he had tendered his resignation which was accepted and the Directors appointed Mr.

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the name of his cousin Fraser who was a member of his household. Such was the prevalent view in Calcutta at the time. Impey was known by the name of Justice Pulbandi (the keeping of bridges and embankments in dispair). Hicky's Gazette published a number of satires on Sir Elijah Impey giving publicity to his shady transactions.

Wheeler to take the place of Clavering who had in the meantime become Governor-General. Hastings atonce withdrew his resignation and expressed his determination to remain in his position, and sent orders to the officers of the Company's forces not to obey the General's orders. Hastings and Barwell passed a resolution that by usurping the place of the Governor-General Clavering had vacated his seat as member and his post of Commander-in-Chief. The matter was referred to the judges who declared that he had not resigned and that Hastings continued to be Governor-General. Clavering was greatly disappointed and after sometime he died in September, 1777. Wheeler arrived in December and Hastings mentioned his predominance in the Council. Sir Eyre Cook who was appointed in Clavering's place did not support Francis and Hastings too found him difficult to manage. Francis found himself in a minority and was powerless to do mischief. He had done his best to rouse public opinion in England against Hastings and sent reports of the Company's misgovernment to the Directors. Meanwhile the first Maratha war broke out and Wheeler and Francis opposed the plans of the Governor-General. He could not afford to sit idle and gave up the prosecution of the war. At last his patience was exhausted and he challenged Francis to a duel in which the latter was wounded by his adversary. It was most undignified for the Governor-General of British territories in India to settle his dispute by having recourse to a duel but perhaps he had no option.

Francis's' Indian career was over and beaten, baffled and crest-fallen he sailed for England in December, 1780. Carrying rage and bitterness in his heart and determined to revenge on the man who had frustrated all his ambitions and blasted his hopes. Hence forward the activity of these guards grew less and Hastings was not much troubled by his colleagues.

In England Francis fomented much ill-feeling against Hastings but his inveterate hostility towards the Governor-General prevented him from realising the great wish of his life. All his attempts to obtain the Governor-Generalship of India failed. When Lord Cornwallis died, he tried to get it but the ministers could not be persuaded to grant his wish. As Lord Brougham rightly said they could no more have obtained the East India Company's consent to the appointment of Francis than they could have transported the Himalaya mountains to the Beadonhall Street. It is a pity that a man of such ability should have wasted himself in a futile opposition. He never recovered from his disappointment and bitterness even in his retirement. The last public act of his life relating to India was on the 25th March, 1807-when he asked a few questions about the Vellore mutiny.

Supreme Court and Council

It has been said before that the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court was not clearly defined. It was supposed to extend over Fort William and subordinate factors and the servants of the Company and her servants. These words were ambiguous and led to a serious dispute between the Court and Council. The judges claimed to hear complaints against the acts of the Executive and its officers and cared nothing for any rules and regulations which the Council might make. As Alfred Lyall very pertinently observes, the capital question of sovereignty stood open to be explained thoeretically according to the interests or contention of either side.[1] The Company held their lands by grants from the Mughal and vested with the Indian princes, and therefore did not want in all matters to submit to the authority of the Supreme Court. The judges felt that they were appointed by the Crown and therefore they thought that their jurisdiction extended wherever the Company's sway was exercised. They refused to recognize the sovereignty of the Nawab and claimed to deal with all cases of British subjects. The Council declared that the Court had no jurisdiction over the landowners of Bengal, who were in reality the subjects of the Nawab. The term British subject was not clearly defined; it might mean only Europeans or the entire people of Bengal or only those who lived in Calcutta. The crux of the matter, however, was whether the Court had any jurisdiction over the Zamindars, the revenue, and the judicial officers of the Company. Hastings held that it was monstrous to subject Indians to English law and procedure and himself granted bail to the Raja of Vishnupur who had been confined to prison for some default in payment of revenue. Mill has dealt with the subject at length in his history. He says that jurisdiction regarding revenue matters had only been exercised in India by the authority that was entrusted with the collection of revenue. The Provincial Councils and the Courts called Dewani Adalat examined this jurisdiction. The process was simple and suited to the habits and sentiments of the people. The Supreme Court began to interfere in the proceedings and defaulters were led to think that if they sought the protection of the Supreme Court they would be easily let off. This rendered all action by revenue judges nugatory. Whenever any coercive process was employed against a defaulter, he was bailed out by the Supreme Court. The result of this was that the collection of revenue became difficult and men who did not want to pay sought redress in the Supreme Court. In 1766 Hastings tried to find a solution of the difficulty by suggesting the amalgamation of the Supreme Court and the Sadar Dewani Adalat. But the majority did not agree with him and the plan was abandoned. The differences between the Court

1. Davies, Administration of Warren Hastings, p. 180.

and the Council were aggravated by the attitude which they adopted towards the important cases that came up for decision.

THE PATNA CASE (1779)

Towards the close of 1776 Shahbaz Khan, a rich Muhammedan in Bihar died leaving a large fortune but no legal heir. His widow Nadira Begum claimed the property by virtue of a will and deed of gift. But the nephew of the deceased Bahadur put forward his claim as the adopted son of his uncle. The Qazis and Mufties deputed by the Council to ascertain the facts reported that the will and deed were forgeries and recommended a division of the property into four parts, three of which were to be given to Bahadur, Baz and one to the widow who was not satisfied with the decision. She appealed to the Supreme Court and the appeal was admitted on the ground that the nephew was a farmer of revenue and therefore subject to the jurisdiction of the Court. The judges awarded the widow 3 lakhs as damages and the Qazis and Mufties of the Provincial Council were censured. The question of real importance was whether a member of revenue courts was subject to the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. The judgment caused a panic in Behar and nearly 39 farmers of revenue offered to resign on the ground that they would not be able to collect the revenue if they were harassed by *ryot* and Zamindars by carrying their complaints to the Supreme Court.

The Cossijurah Case

Kashinath Babu, a resident of Calcutta tried to recover a large sum of money he had lent to the Raja of Cossijura. He brought a suit in the Supreme Court and as the Raja was a Zamindar, the judges readily entertained it. The Council below the Supreme Court had no jurisdiction over the Zamindars and sent word to the Raja to pay no attention to the Court's process. The Raja did the same and when the Sheriff went with his officials to arrest him, he was driven away. Thereupon the Supreme Court in great anger sent a force of sixty or seventy persons to arrest the Raja. The Council was equally prompt and despatched a force which encountered the Sheriff and rescued the Raja from him.

Kashinath then brought an action for trespass against the members of the Council individually. At first they appeared in Court but later all of them except Barwick withdrew. The wrath of the judges fell on the Company's attorney who was sent to prison where he died shortly afterwards.

Such were the scandalous proceedings in which the Court and the Council were engaged in to the utter detriment of the

interests of the Company and the reputation and prestige of the British nation.

The manner in which the Court dealt with the Company's servants, ruined the moral influence of the Executive and exposed the officers of Government to 'continual persecutions by litigants and irresponsible persons'.[1]

Hastings suggested to the Council that Impey should be made judge of the Sadar Dewani Adalat and by this measure he hoped to end the conflict between the Executive and the judiciary. It was opposed in the Council but he carried it by his casting vote. To many 'Impey's acceptance of this office seemed inconsistent with the independence of the Chief Justice and there is no doubt that 'Impey exposed himself to a temptation to which no judge ought to expose himself'. The plan was opportune but the Directors did not approve of it and the old practice was restored again in 1782.

To put an end to difficulties caused by conflict of jurisdiction an Act of Parliament was passed in 1781 by which it was laid down that the Governor-General and his Council were not subject to the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court for any act done by them in their public capacity. All revenue matters were excluded from the purview of this Court. No one was to be subject to its jurisdiction in cases of inheritance and succession on the ground that he was an employee of the Company. All cases in which Englishmen were parties were to be tried by it ; it was to exercise jurisdiction over the inhabitants of Calcutta, Hindu and Muslim, but their respective laws were to be applied in all private civil suits. When one party was Hindu or Muslim, the law to be applied was that of the defendant.

Thus were the evils of the Regulating Act of 1773 remedied.

Impey's conduct was strongly criticised in England and in May, 1782, the House of Commons voted his recall to answer the charge of having accepted an office from the servants of the Company. On his return he was impeached for several charges one of which was the execution of Nand Kumar and the acceptance of the judgeship of the Sadar Dewani Adalat.

Impey left India in December, 1783 and reached London in June, 1784, but he did not resign from his high office until November, 1787. A few days after his impeachment he was removed.

1. Fifth Report, I, p. CCLXXVI.

CHAPTER X

War and Reform

The First Maratha War (1775-82)

Affairs at Poona. The news of the disaster of Panipat broke the heart of the Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao and he died in June, 1761. He was succeeded by his son Madho Rao but as the latter was quite young and inexperienced, the affairs of the State were managed by his uncle Raghunath Rao, better known in history as Raghoba. The nephew, who was a man of ability and character, soon asserted his independence and tried to shake off the yoke of his uncle. Annoyed at thus, Raghoba and his Dewan Shekhar Ram Bapu resigned, this leaving the young prince to choose his own officers. Among those whom the Peshwa appointed was Balaji, better known in history as Nana Phadnavis, so called because he held the office of Phadnavis or Chief Accountant. Raghoba felt dissatisfied at the loss of power and his anger was inflamed further by his wife Anandi Bai who had a great personal dislike for the Peshwa's mother Gopika Bai. The jealusy between these two ladies served to embitter Raghoba's feelings still more and at the instigation of his wife he asked the Nizam to invade Poona. The Nizam responded to his call and the Peshwa unable to cope with the enemy submitted to his uncle and was put under restraint. In 1763 the Nizam espoused the cause of Janoji Bhnsla of Berar and invaded Poona. The Peshwa induced Holkar and Gaekwar to assist his uncle. An engagement followed between the two enemies in which the Nizam was defeated. Cordial relations were restored between the uncle and the nephew but they were soon disturbed by the intrigues of Anandi Bai.

In 1764 Madho Rao led an expedition against Hyder Ali of Mysore who was increasing the power of his domains but he was obliged by the machinations of his uncle to make peace with him. Again two years later, the Peshwa marched against Hyder Ali who was attacked at the same time by the Nizam and the English. Hyder Ali bribed the Marathas to retire (1767) and persuaded the Nizam to go over to his side. The Peshwa's growing influence alarmed the Bombay Council and they sent Moystyn to report on the actual state of affairs at Poona, and to prevent

the Peshwa from entering into an alliance with the Nizam and the ruler of Mysore.

The Marathas now crossed into Hindustan and ravaged the Company up to the Doab. Mahadji Sindhia had by now risen into prominence and along with Tukoji Rao Holkar he levied tribute from the Rajputs and Jats. Gradually his power increased considerably and in 1771 he induced Shah Alam the Mughal Emperor to leave the protection of the English and go to Delhi escorted by a large Maratha army.

Madho Rao had been suffering from ill-health for sometime. He died after a prolonged illness on 18th November, 1772 at the age of 28. It has been truly said that his death produced far more serious consequences than even the battle of Panipat. He was a man of noble character who always protected the weak against the strong and tried to do justice to all. His anxiety to free himself from the tutelage of his uncle was due to the fact that he did not approve of the corruption in Maratha politics. Grant Duff writes of him:

> "The root which invigorated the already scathed and wide-extending tree was cut off from the stem and the plains of Panipat were not more fatal to the Maratha Empire than the early death of this excellent prince. Although the military talents of Madho Rao were very considerable, his character as a sovereign is entitled to much greater respect than that of any of his predecessors (p. 352).

Madho Rao was succeeded by his younger brother Narayan Rao, a weak man given to a life of ease and pleasure with Sakha Ram Bapu as minister and the Nana as the Chief Accountant. But he was soon murdered and it is probable that his death was encompassed by Anandi Bai. Raghoba was duly invested with the Peshwaship but he did not find it a bed of roses. He was opposed by Sakha Ram Bapu and the Nana and the disconcerting announcement was soon made that the Peshwa's widow Ganga Bai was with child. She was removed to a place of safety where, on 18th April, 1774, a posthumous son was born and Raghoba's hopes were destroyed by an unkind fate. The twelve leaders

1. Tukoji Holkar was a general of Malhar Rao Holkar who had died at Alampur, on May 20, 1766. He was succeeded by his saintly daughter-in-law Ahalya Bai. The line of Holkars was thus weakened and Sindhia became the strongest Maratha chieftain.

> known as the Bara Bhai banded themselves together to prevent Raghoba from usurping the Peshwa's *gaddi*. A Council of Regency was formed to carry on the administration in the name of the child Peshwa. Raghoba received no support from Holkar and Sindhia on whom he had counted. He turned to the Gaekwad and the English. In spite of Raghoba's opposition, the child was placed on the *gaddi* and it has been rightly said that 'from this time Raghunath Rao (Raghoba) becomes in fact a mere pawn in the complicated intrigues and consequent struggles' in which the Maratha leaders gradually played more and more for their own individual aggrandisement and but little for the cause of the Maratha State, thus facilitating the ultimate supremacy of the English."[1]

Raghunath Rao in this hour of his misfortune turned to the English for help. The Bombay Government had felt that and instructed their confrere and at Calcutta and Madras had far outstripped them in the political race and they decided to negotiate with Raghoba for the cession of the islands of Salsette and Bassein. While matters were still under discussion, the Portuguese made efforts to recover Bassein which had been wrested from them by the Marathas in 1739. The Bombay Council had judged it necessary to take possession of Salsette and justified their action by saying that its capture by the Portuguese would have been of infinite prejudice to trade, revenue and interests of the Company in those parts. Raghoba was defeated by Hari Phadke and was in need of further help. He concluded an offensive and defensive alliance with the English. At last the treaty of Surat was made between Raghoba and the English on 7th March, 1775, by which (1) the earlier treaties were confirmed; (2) the English were to help Raghoba with a force of 2,500 men; (3) and Salsette and Bassein were to be ceded to them in perpetuity with a share of the revenue of the Baroach and Surat districts; (4) the English were to be consulted in making peace with Poona. Raghoba was asked to deposit six lakhs as security for his engagement. Desirous of quick action, the Bombay Government assembled a force under Colonel Keating who reached Surat in February, 1775, with instructions to assist Raghoba against his opponents and give him every assistance that he needed. An engagement followed between the allies of Raghoba and the forces sent by the Court of Regency on the 18th May, 1775, on the plain of Arras in which the latter was defeated. About the same time news came that Maratha fleet was destroyed by the English and this greatly

1. Cambridge, History, V, p. 256.

disheartened the ministerial party at Poona. Raghoba's cause seemed to triumph for the moment but all arrangements were upset by the decision of the Supreme Council at Calcutta.

Treaty of Purandhar, 1st March, 1776

When the Calcutta Council heard of the treaty of Surat, they disapproved of it and described it as 'unseasonable, impolitic, unjust and unauthorised'. In Hastings' words it was unseasonable because it was made with Raghoba at a time when he had been totally abandoned by his former adherents. It was impolitic because it threw the whole burden of the wars on the Company without an adequate force and without financial resources and because it was undertaken without paying any heed to the general interest of the Company in India. It was unjust because the Marathas had done no injury to the English. Though Hastings was opposed to the treaty, he did not favour the idea of ordering the Bombay Government to withdraw its forces peremptorily and call off the war for he knew the consequences of such hasty action. Francis supported him and the majority of the Council agreed that the Government of Bombay should be told that hostilities must cease atonce. The Bombay Government obeyed and withdrew their troops who had won the battle of Arras but the President made a dignified protest and sent their agent to represent fully to the Government at Calcutta 'the motives for all our proceeding' but the Governor-General and his Council informed him of the step they had taken. They sent Colonel Upton to enter into negotiations with the Poona Ministry and the treaty of Purandhar was signed on 1st March, 1776. The Bombay Government's protests were unheeded. Nana Phadnavis on behalf of the Poona Government offered the same advantages as had been conferred upon the English by the treaty of Surat. By this treaty the alliance with Raghoba was given up; he was to be granted a pension of 3 lakhs per annum and was not to be allowed to keep an army in his service. The English were to get Salsette and a share of the revenues of Baroach and the mouth of the Narbada. The patriotic party at the Maratha Court, did not however favour the treaty, and new difficulties arose: The President of the Council at Bombay described the treaty as highly injurious to the interest and reputation of the Company and held that it would be a serious breach of faith with Raghoba. Raghoba, exasperated by the dubious conduct of the English, resolved to carry on the war himself and sought the help of Mahadji Sindhia but in vain. Meanwhile despatches arrived from the Court of Directors expressing approval of the treaty of Surat and suggesting the retention of Salsette which had been secured by the English.

The affairs at Poona assumed a more serious aspect with the arrival of a French agent, the chevalier de St. Lubin. He had come to negotiate an alliance with the Marathas and Nana Phadnavis, his specific object being to secure a seaport near Bombay and a factory. The Nana treated him with great attention although he knew what the promises of the French support meant.

The English were already at war with the American Colonies whom France was about to support and this considerably increased the anxiety of the English in India. The Bombay Government rightly feared the results of French intrigue and remarked that a repetition of the scene of wars and intrigues formerly enacted on the coast of Coromandal, might end in 'our total subversion'. They reiterated their view that Raghoba must be supported and they were helped by the dissensions that had broken out at Poona between Sakha Ram Bapu, the aged minister, and his younger but more resolute and astute rival the Nana. The former asked the Bombay Government for help which was promised. The Bombay Government obtained the approval of the Calcutta Government only by the casting vote of Hastings. Francis and Wheeler condemned the action of the Bombay Government, while Hastings and Barwell justified its illegality on grounds of emergency. After a long and stormy debate the following resolutions were passed by the Supreme Council:

1. That the President and Council of Bombay are justified in helping Raghoba at the request of the ministry at Poona.

2. That a sum of ten lakhs of rupees be immediately granted to the Bombay Government for the prosecution of war.

3. That military assistance be sent to the Presidency.

It was decided to send a force under Colonel Leslie and the President and Council at Bombay were authorised to carry on the war.

The occasion was hardly ripe for a declaration of hostilities. Mr. Davies remarks:

> "The prestige of each of the three Presidencies could hardly have been at a lower ebb. Bengal was still in the throes of faction, the progress of which had been watched with interest by the Court of every native State in India. Nor did they have to rely only on hearsay and espionage to obtain their information. Many times Hastings had occasion to remark on the leakage that

> made the most secret consultations of his Government common knowledge to every foreign agent in Calcutta, and he had grounds for believing that the source of the leak was a member of the Council—none other than Mr. Francis. Madras similarly riven with divisions and burdened with an exhausted treasury, was like a leaf that the first strong wind would blow from its branch. Nor, as Hastings surveyed the scene outside the borders of the Company's possessions, could he have desired greater comfort from what he at hed there. Oudh, the sole ally, was dissolving into anarchy with a vicious and incompetent ruler an exhausted treasury, a huge burden of debt to the Company, a mutinous army, and an incipiently rebellious Zamindari, it was as an ally more of a liability than an asset."

From the west came ominous news that the Marathas were composingtheir divisions that had for a long period rendered them powerless to intervene effectively in the political arena. As proof of this they had already sent an expedition against Haider Ali. With the union of all the Maratha States and leaders, immediately there was created a most formidable military rival to the English, made more formidable by its possession of drilled and disciplined troops under the command of French officers. The same was true of Haider Ali. In league with the French and expectantly awaiting from them strong re-inforcements of troops, officers and money, he lay perched above the mountains of the Western Ghats, commading every pass into the defenceless plains of the Carnatic, like an eagle ready to swoop. In his head had already been hatched the old scheme of driving the English into the sea. And what was still more disturbing, every packet from England brought news of reverses and failures in the war that was raging beyond the Atlantic.[1]

The English marched to Poona along with Raghoba with a view to installing him in the Peshwa's gaddi. Nana Phadnavis had fully prepared himself for the encounter and secured the help of Holkar and Sindhia. He had managed to prevent the Calcutta Government from sending reinforcements to the Deccan over land from Bengal. When the English force reached Poona accompanied by Raghoba and his son (in January, 1779) it was destroyed by the Marathas and its General, frightened by the superior number of the enemy, advised retreat. Raghoba asked them not to retreat but his entreaties proved unavailing. They retreated to Wadgaon (J. 1779) village twenty-two miles north-west of Poona. The Marathas who had kept themselves fully informed of their

A dministration of Warren Hastings, pp. 245-47.

movements attacked them continuously and forced them to lay down arms. The Nana demanded surrender of Raghoba but he escaped to Sindhia's camp. Through the latter's mediation the disgraceful convention of Wadgāon was signed (January 17, 1779) by which (1) all territorial possessions attained by Bombay since 1773 were to be restored; (2) the force coming from Bengal to be stopped; (3) and Sindhia was to obtain the share of the Baroach revenues; (4) and a sum of 41,000 rupees and two hostages were to be surrendered as a guarantee for fulfilling the terms of the treaty.

The convention of Wadgaon was a heavy blow. to the prestige of the English. Hastings wrote: "The terms of the treaty almost made me sick with shame while I read them! He resolved to wipe out the disgrace. It was a difficult task, for the air was thick with rumours of a coalition between the Nizam, Haider and the Marathas and Hastings perceived clearly that if the British dominion was to survive in India, he must strike hard and with boldness. He atonce repudiated the convention.

Leslie had wasted his time in Bundelkhand by involving himself in the quarrels of the Indian chiefs. His acts were promptly repudiated. Letters to this effect were issued to princes.

Goddard pushed on by rapid marches passing through the Malwa country without receiving any assistance from Mudaji Bhosle who had promised to enter into alliance with Hastings. Goddard reached Surat traversing a distance of 300 miles in 20 days, on the -6th of February. Sindhia who had mediated between the English and the Nana at Wadgaon and was desirous of establishing his own ascendency in Poona politics, was secretly fomenting hostilities against the Company. But he now saw that no useful purpose could be served by supporting Raghoba and therefore he allowed him to escape from his custody. Raghoba fled to the English and Goddard granted him a pension of Rs. 50,000 a month. The English found that it was useless to back the claims of a pretender who was so unpopular with his own people and they decided to give him up. With the disappearance of Raghoba from the region of practical politics the English came to the front as one of the principal parties to the war, Goddard opened negotiations with the Nana but the latter, evidently strengthened by his alliance with Haider Ali and the Nizam, insisted on the surrender of Raghoba and the restoration of Salsette.

Foiled in his efforts to make peace with the Nana, Goddard turned to the Gaekwar and entered into a treaty with him (26th

January, 1780). The Gaekwar agreed to assist him with a force of 3,000 horses and cede a portion of the revenues as soon as he was put in possession of Ahmedabad. Hastings had already made an alliance with the Rana of Gohad who was much troubled by the Marathas.

Goddard marched to Ahmedabad and captured it by storm on the 15th of February (1780) as having crossed the Narbada. Sindhia and Holkar came to help the Peshwa but it is doubtful whether Sindhia was really sincere.

But ominous clouds soon appeared on the horizon. Haider Ali had descended upon the Carnatic and in co-operation with the Nizam was supporting the Marathas. It was feared that they might receive help from the French fleets on the west coast. In the midst of these dangers Hastings acted with great coolness and vigour. Hastings's diplomacy succeded in detaching the Raja of Berar from the coalition and a peace was separately made with Sindhia. In the same year Popham captured the Fort of Gwalior, so far deemed impregnable in India. A treaty was made with Sindhia at Salbai in May, 1782. The terms of the treaty were,...

1. All the territory conquered by the Company since the treaty of Purandhar should be restored to the Marathas together with three lakhs worth of revenue as Baroach.

2. The Gaekwad's possessions were restored to the condition in which they were before the war (1775).

3. The English agreed not to give help to Raghoba who was to be given a pension of Rs. 25,000 a month by the Peshwa.

4. Haider Ali was to retain all territory taken from the English and the Nawab of Arcot.

5. The Peshwa and the English undertook to see that their allies lived at peace with one another.

6. Salsette was retained by the English and the independence of the Gaekwad was secured.

The final ratification of the treaty was delayed till the next year by the Nana who was still trying to get back Salsette and seeking Haider's help to enable him to avoid it.

The treaty of Salbai is one of the important treaties in Indian history. It defined the relations between the Marathas and the English and secured to the latter a preponderating influence in Indian politics. It made peace possible with the Marathas for 20 years and gradually led them on to the position of the Paramount Power in India. Mahadji Sindhia's career was assured. So far he had acted in subordination to the Peshwa

but after the treaty of Salbai he rose into prominence and exercised a profound influence on the course of Indian history. The war had proved his great qualities as a leader and statesman of rare ability who put his country's interests above everything else and faced obloquy and opposition with patience and fortitude.

Meanwhile in the south Sir Eyre Coote defeated Haider Ali at Porto Novo on July 1, 1781. Soon after he inflicted another defeat on him at Shollinghar. Haider Ali died of cancer in December, 1782. The stars were now faoourable to the English. The war between England France had been ended by the Treaty of Versailles (1783). Tipu continued the fight but he had to face a terrible coalition As the odds were heavy against him he made peace in March, 1784. The treaty of Mangalare provided for mutual restitution of conquest.

Revenue Reforms of Hasting

The farming system had not worked well for the simple reason that the farmers had contracted to pay a higher revenue than the districts could afford. Hastings proposed the appointment of a commission in order to ascertain precisely the condition of the lands and also the grounds on which a new settlement could be made. It was hardly necessary for the evil results of the farming system stood on record "and that those who were unable to see the drawbacks of such a system were scarcely competent to make a new settlement". What the farmers had done in most cases was to offer high bids and then to abscond in the event of failure to fulfil the obligations. In adopting this policy Government acted very much like the foolish women whom the Apostle describes as always inquiring, but never arriving at a knowledge of the truth.

Hastings and Barwell submitted their proposal the gist of which was that the revenue to be paid by farmers should be settled on the basis of the actual collections during the three preceding years with an allowance of 15 per cent, which will include the charges of collections and their profits. This assessment was to remain in force during the life of the former with the proviso that Government will be quite free to sell the lands to another purchaser if he was found "deficient in his payments". On the death of the purchaser the lands will devolve in his heir or heirs subject to revision of the assessment at the discretion of the Government. It was further suggested that the large Zamindaris should be divided and the smaller one should be preserved on the ground that the large Zamindars were "generally oppressive and extravagant and employed their resources to thwart the Government". With regard to the management of the collection the Governor-General's plan suggested the continuance of the Provincial Councils already established.

Francis put forward a counter-plan that the new settlement should be made on the basis of the actual requirements of the Company, that the contribution of the districts shall be fixed for ever and that the Zamindars shall be declared owner of the soil. He pointed out that the lands were not the property of the East India Company, but of the Zamindars and new claims of natives who owed nothing to government but a fixed portion of the new produce. He went on to observe that the rights and property of the natives were respected by Muhammedans but under the Company's Government 'have neither been regarded. nor understood'. He described the Zamindars as the landed gentry of Bengal who were crushed by the Company's government which was eager 'to annihilate that rank of men, in whom the inheritance and property of the lands of Bengal are vested, in order to transfer to the ruling power the produce of their estates, leaving nothing to the owners but a competent subsistence'. The editor of the Fifth Report suggests that the object of Francis was to indict the Company's administration but it must be borne in mind that a similar plan was afterwards proposed by Lord Cornwallis and opposed by the Directors.

In 1776 Colonel Monson's death entitled the Governor-General to carry his measures in the Council. He suggested the appointment of a commission to make enquiries into the value of the lands and farmers' account and to secure to the *ryots* the undisturbed possession of his land to guard him against military exactions. The Commissioner made the recommendations but no action was taken until 1781. On the 17th August, 1780. was fought the famous duel between Hastings and Francis and after the departure of the latter the following reforms were introduced: (1) A committee consisting of four covenanted servants of the Company was formed subject to the authority of the Governor-General and the entire administration of revenue was entrusted to it. (2) The Provincial Councils were abolished and powers were transferred to the Committee of revenue. (3) The collectors were restored and were to exercise jurisdiction in their respective districts under the direction of the Committee. (4) The office of the Superintendent of the Khalsa records was abolished and its powers and functions were transferred to the Committee of revenue. (5) The Quanugoes were also re-appointed and their powers and functions were also restored. (6) The members of the Committee were to be paid a commission on the collections and the European members were bound by oath to accept no presents or bribes of any kind. Thus the revenue administration was centralised. All the amount collected was to be brought to the Presidency where it was to be managed and handled by the Committee.

Judicial Reforms

The change made in the position of the Supreme Court by the Amending Act of 1781 has already been pointed out. By a resolution of the Governor-General's Council dated 6th of April, 1781, reforms were introduced in the administration of Criminal Justice. The Faujdars and Thanedars of 1774 were abolished and the judges of the Diwani Adalat were invested with powers as magistrates of arresting dacoits and other persons guilty of violent crime. They had no power to try such persons; they were required to send them immediately to the Daroga of the nearest Faujdari with a charge stating the grounds on which they were arrested. The Zamindars were also invested with police powers in certain cases. For the better administration of Criminal Justice, a separate department was established at the Presidency under the Governor-General who was to be apprised of the proceedings of Criminal Courts throughout the province. An officer called the Remembrancer of the Criminal Courts was appointed to arrange the records and to supervise the work of persons invested with criminal jurisdiction.

Hastings abolished the collectors of customs and established three Commissioners who were paid commission on their monthly collections. The Company's goods were subject to the same duties as others. This was done to prevent private persons from using the Company's dastaks. The object of Hastings in doing so was to free the trade of the country from unauthorised exactions, and to make the duties equal and certain, ultimately to produce an increase of trade, and of the revenues arising from it in consequence.

Patronage of learning

Hastings was a lover of oriental learning and he desired to give an impetus to its cultivation by European scholars. By doing so he hoped to unlock the vast treasures which lay hidden in the literature and philosophy of the East to the world. There were five men who gave him great help in these endeavours. These were Nathaniel Halhead, Sir Charles Wilkins, Sir William Jones and Colebrooke, all of whom were men of scholastic tastes. Hastings, of course, was the patron of this glorious band. An assembly of Pandits was held at Calcutta in 1776 to prepare a compendium of laws for the guidance of Courts. It was written in Persian and Halhead was asked by Hastings to translate it into English. Wilkins and Halhead worked together and founded a press for printing books in oriental languages. Within a few years the former acquired a knowledge of Sanskrit and produced an English translation of Bhagwad Gita. The most remarkable of this learned group was Sir William Jones, a born linguist and scholar, who had been in England a member of Dr. Johnson's

Club and a Fellow of the Royal Society. From the day of his arrival in India he became a great friend of Hastings and in co-operation with him founded in January, 1784 the Asiatic Society of Bengal which is still doing excellent work in the field of oriental research. Hastings was offered the Presidentship but he declined the honour and at his suggestion Sir William Jones was elected President. Sir William devoted himself with a great zeal to the study of Indian literature, philosophy and science and opened new fields of enquiry to Western scholars. Thomas Colebrooke also did valuable work and finished the modification of the law Jones had started. Wilkins produced a translation of the Bhagwad Gita to which an introduction was added by Warren Hastings, who described it as a performance of great originality, of a sublimity of conception, reasoning, and diction, almost unequalled, and a single exception among all the known regions of mankind, of a theology accurately corresponding with that of the Christian dispensation, and most powerfully illustrating its fundamental doctrines.

Hastings was passionately desirous of promoting India's indigenous culture and with this end in view he established Calcutta Madarsa for the cultivation of Arabic and Persian studies. He encouraged researches in Geography and Natural History and sent forth his officers to Tibet, to the Red Sea and Cochin China to explore the possibilities of establishing diplomatic and trade relations with them. It was under his patronage that Major Rennel pursued his researches in Geography and published his well-known Bengal Atlas in 1781. A mission was sent to Tibet under Bogle who succeeded in establishing friendly relations with the Lama. The latter used his good offices to help the establishment of commercial and diplomatic relations between China and the British Government in India. A second mission was sent nine years later under Samuel Turner but it produced no results of importance. Subsequent events have vindicated Hastings's policy. When Sir Francis Younghusband went to Tibet during Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty he was received with coldness and had to fight his way into the country. All this need never have been, he said, if we had followed Warren Hastings' example and continued to send agents into Tibet to keep the Tibetans in touch with us and accustomed to look on us as friends.

The Benares Insurrection

An act of high-handedness for which Warren Hastings was much blamed in England was his treatment of Chet Singh, the Raja of Benares. He demanded money from him over and above the stipulated tribute and when the Raja demurred or resisted he levied an exhorbitant fine upon him—a step for which there was no justification. The apologists and biographers of Hastings

have said a good deal to defend his policy and it is therefore necessary to state the whole history of the case in order to enable the reader to form an independent judgment.

The finances of the Company were drained by the Maratha war and the struggle with Haider Ali, and Hastings' great need was to find money. He turned to Chet Singh, the Raja of Benares, who had succeeded his father Balwant Singh on the *gaddi*. Benares was held as a fief from the Nawab Vizier of Oudh and was transferred to the Company by the Treaty of Faizabad in 1775. The Raja enjoyed the hereditary right of the collection of revenues, complete Civil and Criminal jurisdiction and the maintenance of order. In return he paid to his suzerain, the Nawab Vizier, a fixed annual tribute amounting to 22½ lakhs *Nazrana* at the accession of each new ruler and special contributions of men and money in time of need. The *Sanad* granted by the Company conferred upon Chet Singh the Zamindari, the Amini and Faujdari of the territories of Benares and stipulated to recieve the tribute which he used to pay to the Nawab Vizier. It was expressly laid down that no further demand would be made, and the Raja was given the privilege of coining money and maintaining a considerable force for his protection.

Pressed hard for money, Hastings at the instance of Sir Eyre Coote demanded of the Raja 5 lakhs of rupees in addition to his regular tribute of twenty-two lakhs and a half to meet the cost of two battalions of sepoys. The Council supported Hastings though Francis suggested that the demand should be treated as 'entirely exceptional'. The same demand was repeated in the following two years and Chet Singh paid under protest. He claimed exemption from all contributions over and above the stipulated tribute which he had been paying to the Vizier and in doing so he was perfectly within his rights. At this a force was sent into his Zamindari and he was required to pay Rs. 20,000 to meet its cost. In 1780 besides paying his usual subsidy the Raja was asked to furnish a cavalry force 2,000 strong but when he expressed his inability to comply with the demand it was reduced to 1,000. He collected a force of 500 horse and 500 infantry and informed Hastings that they were ready for the Company's service. But the latter was deeply offended at what he regarded as the Raja's contumaciousness and decided to levy upon him a fine of 50 lakhs. He was led to do so by two considerations; he knew that the Raja had amassed a huge fortune; secondly, he considered him guilty of disaffection to his suzerain and therefore worthy of severe punishment. As he said himself he wanted to make him pay largely for his pardon, to exact a severe penalty for his delinquency, and to draw from his guilt the means of relief to the Company's distress.

When the demand for thesubsidy was made for the third time Chet Singh offered through a confidential agent a bribe of 2 lakhs to Hastings to obtain a remission of the subsidy. The latter accepted the money without consulting his Council, an act of serious constitutional impropriety, and applied it to defray the expenses of Camac's expedition against Sindhia. Yet the original demand for 50 lakhs was repeated with a ruthlessness which shows Hastings as utterly devoid of even 'ordinary feeling and consideration' and he threatened to employ military force when the delay overtaxed his patience. Besides the normal tribute the Raja was asked to pay a fine of 50 lakhs and to furnish troops to assist in the wars of the Company. Such was the position in 1781. Mr. Davies makes an extraordinary statement that Hastings at this time feared a collaboration of the Marathas and Chet Singh and disaster to the Company's interests. There is no evidence to support such a view and Mr. Davies himself seems to be half convinced of the correctness of Hastings when he ascribes it to 'intuition'.

In discussing this transaction there is another consideration which should be borne in mind. There was personal ill-feeling between Hastings and Chet Singh on account of a tactless message from the latter to General Clavering "to compliment him on his supposed accession to the Government at the time of Hastings' resignation." This in Hastings' opinion was 'indecent with respect to my office, unjustifiable with regard to his situation, and, a proof of his rooted disaffection to the English administration. Before he left Calcutta to deal with the Raja, he determined to punish him for his offence and told Wheeler, Member of the Council, of his intentions.

With an escort of no more than 500 men, Hastings left Calcutta to stamp out a 'rebellious conspiracy' up the Ganges. On August 12 Chet Singh received the Governor-General on the border of his State which Mr. Davies calls 'Zemindary' at Buxer and begged forgiveness. The Governor-General received him coldly and refused to accept his turban, which he tried to place in his lap as a token of submission. He was told that nothing could be done until he had reached Benares. Both travelled separately and when Hastings reached Benaras the Raja's request for a second interview was refused.

A detailed statement of the offence of the Raja was sent to him and an immediate answer was demanded. He was informed that the danger to which Colonel Camac's force was exposed was due to the Raja's delay in paying the subsidy of 1780. The Governor-General went on to say:

"Besides this, I required in the name of the Governor-General and Council by letter, and ordered Mr. Foroke to repeat the requisition in person, that you should furnish a body of horse to assist and act with the armies of the Company; and when Mr. Markham succeeded Mr. Foroke I gave him orders to repeat the demand, which he did accordingly with frequent and almost daily importunity, limiting the number to 1,500 and afterwards to 1,000. To this demand you returned evasive answer nor to this hour have you contributed a single horseman."[1]

Hastings charged the Raja with an attempt to cause disorder in the Company's government and with the misgovernment of his own territories. He wrote to him that the robberies and murders were daily committed in the street of Benaras to the great and public scandal of the English name'. These charges speak for themselves. The Raja's reply to Hastings was that he had obeyed his orders with the utmost promptness. As regards the furnishing of the cavalry force the Raja added:

"In compliance with your wishes I collected five hundred horses and a substitute from the remainder five hundred *Barkandazes* of which I sent you information, and I told Mr. Markham that they were ready to go to whatever place they should be sent. No answer, however, came from you in this head, and I remained astonished at the cause of it. Repeatedly I asked Mr. Markham about an answer to my letter about the horse but he told me that he did not know the reason of no answer having been sent; I remained astonished."

The reply of Chet Singh was regarded by the Governor-General as 'not only unsatisfactory in substance but offensive in style'. But he was for drastic action; he easily persuaded himself:

"The ban left him (Chet Singh) in the full exercise of powers which he had notoriously abused, and which it was to be apprehended he would employ for the most dangerous purposes, was totally inconsistent with the maxims of justice and prudence."

Without further parley he ordered the Resident to place the Raja under arrest in his own Capital and sent two companies of sepoys to mount guard on his palace. This insane rashness

1. Forrest, Administration of Warren Hastings, p. 193.
Secret Select Committee's Proceedings, III, p. 782.

brought swift retribution. The Raja's men found the indignity to which their chief was subjected unbearable.

A message to the Raja from Hastings that 'every sepoy is a European, and every European is as the Company, if a drop of their blood is shed, yours shall answer for it' had no effect and the entire force was massacred by the infuriated men of Chet Singh. In the confusion that ensued the Raja escaped with his family and treasure to his fortress at Latiffgarh, leaving Benares in a state of turmoil and full of his armed retainers. Another detachment under an English Officer sent to quell the disturbance was fired upon from the houses and destroyed. A feeling of consternation spread throughout the locality and the whole population of Benares broke out in an open insurrection. Hastings believed that the outbreak was due to the rebellious intentions of Chet Singh but it is more probable, as even his defenders admit, that it was due to 'spontaneous combustion, arising from the anger of the Raja's followers at the indignity offered to their prince and the paucity of Governor-General's escort'. Benares was like a prairie on fire and everywhere the greatest insecurity prevailed. Hastings hastily fled to Chunar and was deprived of his baggage and escort by the insurgents. He put himself in communication with his officers to collect forces while all sorts of rumour spread creating a state of anxiety and confusion. It took three months to collect men and money to deal effectively with the Raja who had at his back and call a force of 20,000 devotedly loyal to him. He was defeated and the fortress of Bijaigarh in which he had deposited his treasures was surrendered by his followers.

Hastings returned to Benares and gradually order was restored in the city. A general amnesty was proclaimed and all except Chet Singh, his brother and those who had taken an active part in the rebellion were pardoned. A nephew of Chet Singh was placed on the *gaddi* and adequate arrangements were made for the due administration of the territories entrusted to his care. The police and the magistracy of the city were placed under a Muslim Ali Ibrahim Khan for the Governor-General had no confidence in the Hindu inhabitants of the town. The measures which Hastings devised for the administration of the province were warmly approved by his colleagues.

The treasure of the Raja was looted by British military officers. Major Pokham, the commander of the force, had to give way before their insatiable greed. Thus was the fair name of the Company besmirched and Hastings' adventure, so ill-advised and thoughtless, resulted in a needless waste of human lives and money which the Company could ill-afford for a distant and uncertain prospect of adding 17 lakhs to her revenues.

The Chet Singh affair was indeed a blot upon Hastings' honour and severely damaged his reputation. It formed one of the counts of impeachment against him. He was accused of violating the terms of the treaty which bound him to respect the claims and dignity of the Raja and to demand from him nothing beyond the stipulated tribute. The Parliamentary orators headed by Burke described the Raja as an independent Prince and questioned the right of the Governor-General to insult him in such an indecent manner. Modern research has shown that Hastings's conduct was "vindictive and merciless" and his actions ' certainly precipitated the storm from the cloud in which it had gathered". In adjudging guilt a few questions arise which must be clearly explained.

1. Whether Chet Singh was an independent Raja or a mere Zamindar ?

2. Whether the Company had not bound itself to levy no contribution upon him beyond his normal tribute of 22½ lakhs ?

3. Whether Chet Singh was in rebellion against the Company ?

4. Whether the transaction was moral or even politic ?

The Raja was not an independent Prince, it is true, but on Hastings' own admission he was more than a mere Zamindar. If he was nothing more than a Zamindar, then it was clearly wrong on the part of Hastings to demand money from him alone. He should have levied a tax or contribution from all Zamindars who were dependent upon the Company or subject to its suzerainty. But this was not done. Hastings' own statement that "there was no other person in the situation of Chet Singh" shows that he did not consider him as an ordinary Zamindar and distinguished him from others of the same class.

The second question does not admit of much controversy. The Sanad granted to the Raja by the Company expressly provided that he was to pay only 22½ lakhs annually and that no further demand would be made upon him. The terms were perfectly clear and left no room for equivocation or doubt.

"No demands shall be made upon him by the Hon'ble Company, of any kind, or on any pretence whatsoever, nor shall any person be allowed to interfere with his authority, or to disturb the peace of his country."

Though the Raja was not bound to pay anything beyond the stipulated tribute, yet he had not altogether refused to comply with the wishes of the Governor-General. He had paid though

under protest and expressed his willingness to furnish 500 horse and 500 infantry, but the Governor-General who was eager to punish him paid no heed to his letter which has been referred to before. Nor did the Resident care to ascertain his wishes in the matter.

As regards the charge of rebellion against the Company there is not a shred of evidence to support it. The entire chain of circumstances related above goes to show that the Raja never meditated rebellion against the Company nor did he intend to incur the displeasure of the Governor-General. Even when he met him at Buxar he was apologetic and submissive but the irate Proconsul persisted in his attempt to goad him into rebellion.

Hastings's conduct was impolitic in the highest degree. To arrest the Raja among his own subjects and in his capital was a proceeding which admits of no justification. The responsibility for the insurrection rests wholly upon Hastings and though he acted with a remarkable presence of mind in a grave crisis, which might have cost his life, it cannot be said that his judgment was sound or prescience certain. The adventure yielded no money for the Raja's treasury contained only 23 lakhs which were plundered by the Company's troops. The conduct of the officers was particularly reprehensible and out of the spoils of Mrs. Hastings received a set of dressing boxes "all beautifully inlaid with jewels", which were returned by her husband. The net result of the campaign was that the Company lost more than it gained. The revenue did not increase much and in later years when Lord Cornwallis sent Jonathan Duncan as Commissioner in 1788 to report on the condition of Benares he wrote that cultivation had much declined since Chet Singh's defeat and flight, that in certain districts there was nothing but desolation as far as the eye could reach.

On principle Hastings' demand was wrong and the manner in which he coerced Chet Singh is extremely indefensible. To exact money from him by means of subterfuges and shifty devices and to press the demand even after the acceptance of a bribe albeit it was spent for the Company—and to humiliate him in the eyes of his own subjects, were acts which no honest historian can uphold. The Select Committee of 1783 stated the truth :

> 'The complication of cruelty and fraud in the transaction admits of few parallels. Mr. Hastings..............displays himself as a zealous servant of the Company, bountifully giving from his own fortune ....from the gift of a man whom he treats with the utmost

severity, and whom he accuses in this particular of disaffection to the Company's cause and interests. With £ 23,000 of the Raja's money in his pocket, he persecutes him to his destruction.''

The Begams of Oudh

Having failed to get money from Chet Singh, Hastings turned to the Begams of Oudh and landed himself into another sordid transaction which brought much obloquy upon his head and considerably tarnished his reputation. While he was staying at Chunar awaiting reinforcements, the Nawab Vizier of Oudh, Asafudowlah, came to confer with him. He owed the Company a crore and a half of rupees. He pleaded utter inability to pay his debts and informed Hastings that it was impossible for him to maintain the English troops employed in protecting his territories. Oudh was an important State on the frontier of the Company's possessions and it was neccessary that a way out of the difficulty must be found. The immediate problem was to find a sum big enough to enable the Nawab Vizier to pay the debts. The late Nawab Shujaudowlah had accumulated a large treasure amounting to two crores and after his death left extensive Jagirs which were all taken possession of after his death by his widow and his mother (the mother and grandmother of the present Nawab respectively). Asafudowlah held that the treasure belonged to the State and that the debt due to the Company was first charge on it. He argued that his mother was entitled only to 1/8th of the property after the payment of the debts of her husband and that his grandmother had no claim to inheritance. Sujaudowlah's widow called Bahu Begum refused to surrender treasure to her son, claiming it for herself on the strength of a will, which was never produced. The Nawab Vizier was a weak Prince who could not muster courage to deprive his strong-willed and hot-tempered mother of the property which in his opinion belonged to the State. The ladies on one occasion gave 25 lakhs to the Nawab when he was in sore straits for money. In 1775 the Begam wrote to the Calcutta Council complaining of the conduct of her son and requested Hastings to ask him to stop his importunate demands. Through the meditation of the British Resident an agreement was drawn up between the ladies and the Vizier by which an additional sum of 30 lakhs was paid to the Nawab and the Begams received a full acquittal for the rest of the treasure. Their Jagirs were secured to them without interference for life. Bristow, the English Resident, guaranteed the agreement on behalf of the Company and the Calcutta Council gave it their sanction. It was expressly laid down that no further demand should be made upon the Begams.

Matters stood at this stage when the Nawab visited Hastings at Chunar in 1781 and submitted his difficulties to him. He had satisfied himself that the Begams had carried on secret correspondence with Chet Singh and fomented rebellion. Though there is no evidence to prove the case, Hastings had his own suspicion and this made him less disposed to show any lenieney to the ladies in spite of their high rank.

He set about in right earnest collecting evidence against the Begams. A number of affidavits were produced by certain servant of the Nawab Vizier proving the complicity of the Begams in the Chet Singh affair. These affidavits were based on hearsay and since the man who produced them were servants of the Vizier they did not furnish good evidence of the guilt of the Begams. Even Mr. Davies remarks that the servants of the Nawab had fabricated or exaggerated the Begam's complicity in order to screen their own share in stirring up disorders in Oudh. Colonel Hannay, Commadant of the British Brigade in Oudh and Mr. Middleton, the British Resident corroborated the story again with no more agreement than hearsay. It is clear from the correspondence of Wheeler and Middleton that the Begams had no hostile intentions towards the British. They had never thought of rebellion nor had they entered into dealings with the Raja of Benares. The Court of Directors who examined the records came to the conclusion:

> "it nowhere appears from the papers at present in our possession that the Begams excited any commotion previous to the imprisonment of Chèt Singh, and only armed themselves in consequence of that transaction, and it is probable that such conduct proceeded from motives of self-defence under an apprehension that they themselves might likewise be laid under unwarrantable accusation."

Sir Elijah Impey was asked to come from Calcutta to examine the evidence against the Begams. After a very cursory examination of the affidavits the Begams were declared guilty and it was decided to deprive them of the protection of the Company. A treaty was concluded with the Nawab Vizier in September, 1781 which provided for the removal of English adventurers in the Nawab's service, the curtailment of the military establishment, the resumption of the Jagirs of the Begams, the sequestration of their treasure and the reduction of the Nawab's expenditure. The Nawab on his part agreed to reorganise his finances, to reform his army to control extravagance and to allow the British Resident to superintend the administration of public funds. The Nawab was very much disinclined to carry

out the treaty and deprive the Begams of the Jagirs and treasure but Hastings who felt convinced of their guilt was determined to use pressure to compel him to do it. Four months passed and still nothing was done. Both Middleton, the British Resident and the Nawab shrank from undertaking the disgraceful task but Hastings was peremptory. In December, 1781, he wrote to the Resident:

> "You must allow any negotiations or forbearance but must prosecute both servants until the Begams are at the entire mercy of the Nawab. In case the Resident failed to carry out his orders he threatened to go himself to Lucknow and warn the Vizier that unless he would exact from him assets sufficient to discharge his liabilities to the Company. Middleton who was not very energetic was succeeded by Bristow.
>
> At last the Vizier yielded to the pressure of the Governor General. A detachment of troops was sent to Faizabad and the entire household of the Begams was placed under arrest. The eunuchs Bihar Ali Khan and Jawahar Khan who managed their affairs were seized, deprived of food, thrown into prison and tortured, but it was not until a year had passed that their resistence broke down and they disclosed the hidden treasures of their mistresses. The Resident reported to Hastings that all that force could do had been done."

The treatment meted out to the Begams by Hastings are of the principal charges against him, during his impeachment. Macaulay has described in his vivid style the impression which Sheridan's famous speech on the Begams of Oudh made on his hearers in the House of Lords. In highly embellished language the orator described the misery which befell the Begams and the torments inflicted upon their trusted and faithful agents. The tale of oppression pierced even the heart of Hastings but he maintained that they had excited disturbances in the country and a revolt against their sovereign, the Nawab. There can be no defence of the manner in which Hastings dealt with the Begams. Even if we assume that he was in desperate need of money and that the Begams were guilty of fomenting rebellion in the country, it is difficult to justify that was to say the least of it, a sordid, shabby and sorry business." He had accepted for the Nawab a bribe of ten lakhs to release him from the necessity of coercing the Begams......... a step which he knew was against all canons of Eastern morality............Still he persisted in his high-handed course and showed an utter lack of scruple in money matters.

There is no doubt that Hastings was the principal actor in the drama and the only thing that can be said in his favour is that he was trying to serve his country's interest in a difficult situation. But the utter disregard of moral principles and even chivalrous considerations presents Hastings' character in an odious light. The Nawab and the Vizier both shrank from the task but Hastings was firm and sanctioned the use of force. Even, Sir G.W. Forrest who is a defender of Hastings writes that the cruelty practised by the Nawab and his servants though greatly exaggerated was sufficient to have justified the interference of the Resident. Sir Alfred Lyall too does not approve of Hastings' methods and condemns his conduct as "unworthy and indefensible". A modern writer while applauding his aim writes:

> "But until we hold that mere experience may override all considerations of ethical and political right, we must continue to regard his conduct on these occasions as a serious departure from the best traditions of British statesmanship in the East."[2]

The Begams, be it said to their credit, bore him no malice and in true Indian fashion even sent him a testimonial during his impeachment "commisserating him on his hard and undeserved fate". This was conduct befitting their high position and dignity and in striking contrast with that of their tormentors who had insulted their honour and despoiled them their property. The Nawab acted like a tool in the hands of his British allies who arrogated to themselves the function of masters. He resented their influence and was yet powerless to prevent it. His imbecility, his supervision and the consequent degradation of his Government were the result of the political system which the Company had imposed upon the Indian Princes. Under this system a Prince lost both prestige and stimulus to self-discipline and degenerated into a spineless epicure, a mere sensualist or a creature of caprice, utterly devoid of self-respect and honour. This was what happened to Oudh after the death of Shujaudowlah who was a Prince possessed of courtesy, sagacity and statesmanship. Misgovernment did not come to an end until the annexation of the kingdom to the British dominion in 1856.

Faizullah Khan's case

A third case which damaged Hastings' credit was that of Faizullah Khan who had been left in charge of the Rohilla territories after the war of 1774. He was an able ruler who governed

1. Selections, III, p. 795
2. Roberts' History of India, p. 212

his country well, and tried to make it prosperous. He had entered into a treaty with the Nawab Vizier by which he agreed to furnish military aid to the latter in time of need amounting to "two or three thousand men according to his ability". In 1780 he was required to send 5,000 horse for the defence of the Nawab Vizier's frontier to which he replied that he was bound by treaty to supply two or three thousand troops. He offered to furnish 2,000 horse and 1,000 foot but Hastings was not satisfied. He accused Faizullah of evading the treaty obligations which was entirely untrue and asked the Vizier to resume the Jagirs. Hastings knew well that there was no breach of treaty and yet with amazing effrontery he recorded a minute which contains the following passage:

> "The conduct of Faizullah Khan, in refusing the aid demanded though not an absolute breach of treaty, was evasive and uncandid ....so scrupulous an attention to literal expression, when a more literal interpretation would have been highly useful and acceptable to us, strongly marks his unfriendly disposition, though it may not impeach his fidelity."

But luckily Faizullah was saved from disaster by the fact that the order was not executed immediately and later Hastings' action was disallowed by the Directors who reprimanded him for having recourse to such dishonourable proceedings.

Parliamentary interest in Indian affairs

After the passing of the Regulation Act for seven years public interest in England was mainly concentrated on the American question. The issues between the Colonies and the mother country were fiercely debated and the war of Independence which broke out in 1775 fully occupied the nation's attention. From 1780 onwards interest in Indian affairs was revived again. In 1781 the Company's charter was renewed for ten years and steps were taken to strengthen British control over the administration of India. In the same year two Parliamentary Committees...... Select and Secret on Indian affairs were appointed. The object of the first was to consider the administration of justice in India and the other was charged with the duty of holding an enquiry into the cause of the war in the Carnatic. It worked in secrecy and Dundas acted as its Chairman. The conclusion of peace in Europe and America in 1783 gave the English an opportunity of looking into the Indian affairs. The position in India was such as needed immediate examination. The Company was no longer a trading concern; it had become a political power and its ascendency had been fully established. There was no Indian

power which either singly or in collaboration with others could drive it away from a political field. Besides, its position under the British Constitution was anomalous to a degree and the Government found it not only difficult but dangerous to allow it to do what it liked in India. The Committees of the House of Common submitted their reports and reviewed the entire administration of the East India Company. They urged upon the Directors the recall of Warren Hastings and a clear definition of the power of the Governor-General and his Council. When the Coalition Ministry of Fox and North took office in 1783, Fox introduced his famous India Bill by which he hoped to establish better control of the State of England over the affairs of the Company. They proposed to substitute for the Court of Directors a body of seven Commissioners who were to be answerable for four years except upon an address from either House of Parliament and who were first to be appointed by Parliament and then by the Crown. They were to have absolute authority over the Company's officers and were given the power to administer her territories, revenue and commerce. A body of nine Assistant Directors was appointed by Parliament from among the largest proprietors to look after the details of Commerce. The bill aroused a furious controversy. Pitt objected strongly to the provisions of the bill on the ground that it would transfer the patronage of India from the Directors to the ministers and thus introduce an element of corruption into the Government of the country. Party feeling ran high and some of the sanest politicians regarded the bill as a "disastrous device for vesting the whole government and patronage of India in Fox and his whig satellites." The bill was carried through the Commons with a large majority but was defeated in the Lords through the intervention of the King. A battle royal raged between the Parliamentary parties over the Indian issue and the result was that the Coalition Ministry toppled down and Fox and Burke were driven out of office. Pitt came into power and began to do precisely what he had denounced out of office. He wished to extend the control of the State over the affairs of the Company in India and with this object in view he brought forward his famous India Bill of 1784 which placed the Company in subordination to the British Government.

By this Act all civil and military matters were to be managed by a body of Six Commissioners who constituted a Board of Control, consisting of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, one of the Secretaries of State and four other Privy Councillors, appointed by the King and holding office during his pleasure. The President was to have a vote and a casting vote. They had no patronage but they were given the power "to superintend,

direct and control all acts, operation, and concerns which in any way relate to the civil or military government or revenues of the British territorial possessions in the East Indies". They were empowered to call for any papers or documents from the Directors and could inspect any minutes, orders or dispatches sent or received by them. The Directors were bound to obey the orders touching the civil and military administration of Indian affairs. Further the Board had the power to approve, disapprove or modify the dispatches sent by the Directors to India and if the latter made default in this the Board could send their dispatches without waiting for an expression of views by the Directors.

A Committee of Secrecy, consisting of not more than three Directors was appointed through which the orders of the Commissioners were to be sent to India, and the Court of Proprietors was debarred from annulling or suspending any resolution of the Directors approved by the Board. The number of members of the Governor-General's Council was reduced to three. The Governor-General, Governors, Commander-in-Chief, and members of Council were to be appointed by the Court of Directors. The control of the Governor-General and his council over the governments of the Presidencies was enlarged in matters of peace and war revenues. As regards the Company's relations with Indian powers the Act included a definite provision which ran thus:

> "Whereas to pursue schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India are measures repugnant to the wish, the honour, and the policy of this nation, the Governor-General and his Council were not without the express authority of the Court of Directors, or of the Secret Committee, to declare wars, or commence hostilities, or enter into any treaty for making war, against any of the country princes or States in India, or any treaty for guaranteeing the possession of any country, province or State, except where hostilities had actually been commenced, or preparations actually made for the commencement of hostilities, against the British nation in India, or against some of the princes of States who were dependent thereon, or whose territories were guaranteed by existing treaty."

This is the clause which laid down the policy of non-intervention about which much will have to be said later on.

There were other provisions in the Act intended to ensure better administration of the Company's affairs in India. The clauses of the Regulating Act for the punishment of offences

committed by British subjects in India were reaffirmed and strengthened. All British subjects were placed under the jurisdiction of competent Courts in India or in England for acts done in the Indian States. Presents were absolutely forbidden and servants of the Company on their return to England had to declare on oath the amount of property which they brought with them. A special Court of three Judges, four peers and six members of the House of Commons, was appointed to try offences committed in India.

Such was the double government established by Pitt's famous Act of 1784. It lasted until 1858 when the Crown was Compelled by the pressure of circumstances to assume the direct administration of Indian affairs. The Board of Control possessed great powers but in practice they were exercised by the President who occupied a position analogous to that of the Secretary of State for India in these days. The Directors still retained their patronage and had not a little share in influencing the policy of the Home Government. Though the new system was not without its defects as will be clear from an examination of the policies and methods followed in the years to come, it must be conceded in fairness that the Act effected a considerable improvement in the machinery of the Indian Government. Sir Alfred Lyall's comment is significant :

> "The immediate effect of Pitt's Act was a great and manifest improvement in the mechanics of Indian Government removing most of the ill-contrieved checks and hindrances which had brought Hastings into collision with his Council and the subordinate governments, abolishing the defects that he had pointed out and applying the remedies he had proposed. All preceding governors had been servants of the East India Company; and Hastings, the first of the Company's Governors-General, had been the scapegoat of an awkward and unmanageable governing apparatus, hampered by divided authority, and distracted by party feuds in Calcutta and in London. The position and powers of the chief executive authority in India were henceforward very differently constituted, and the increased force of the new machinery became very soon visible in the results."[1]

Hastingss' enemies had long been at work exciting hatred and animosity against him. His recall was demanded and at last the Directors had to yield to public opinion.

1. Rise of British Dominion in India, p. 217.

Impeachment

He relinquished his office in 1785. On his return to England he was received well by the King and the ministers. Dundas who had tabled a motion of censure against him in the House of Commons now called him the saviour of India. Pitt, the Prime Minister, treated him coldly and did not deem it proper to advise the King to confer upon him some title or dignity in recognition of his great services. His enemies had done their best for years to stir ill-feeling against him and notably Philip Francis had sedulously educated the members of Parliament in the misdemeanour of his great opponent. His rancorous hatred towards Hastings had led him to misrepresent all his plans and, policies to Burke with a malignity rarely found even in political polemics. The latter moved for papers and in April 1786 brought forward against him a number of charges, the chief of which were the Rohilla war, the treatment of the Begams of Oudh, the Chet Singh affair and the murder of Nand Kumar. The managers of the impeachment were Burke, Fox, Sheridan, Pelham, Erskine and others while Hastings was represented by such well-trained lawyers as Lord, Plumer and Dallas.

The trial began on the 13th February, 1788 and Burke charged the retired pro-consul with every cruelty, outrage and unkindness which human nature can commit and concluded his opening speech with the words :

> "I impeach him in the name of the Commons, House of Parliament whose trust he has betrayed; in the name of the English nation whose ancient honour he has sullied; in the name of the people of India whose country he has turned into a desert and, in the name of human nature itself, in the name of both sexes, in the name of my rank; I impeach the common enemy and oppressor of all."[1]

Sheridan opened the charge relating to the case of the Begams of Oudh in a speech of unrivalled eloquence which caused a sensation in the House and as he concluded he sank, exhausted into the arms of Burke. Tickets for admission to the House of Commons that day were sold for as much as £ 59. The trial dragged on from February 1788 till April 1795 and in the end Hastings was acquitted of all charges by large majorities. The Lords examined the evidence with great care and their verdict was influenced by the consideration that his difficulties were great and that he was a man "uncommonly regardless of money". Hastings was ruined by the lengthy proceedings which had dragged on for seven years and his debts amounted to £ 97,000. But the Directors came to his rescue and granted him a pension and a loan

(1) The reader well do will to read Macaulay's graphic description of the trial in his History of England.

which he was permitted to pay by instalments. Burke's anger was inextinguishable to the last :

> "..............we are not here to compromise matters at all, we do admit that our fame, our honour, nay the very being of the inquisitional power of the House of Commons is gone, if this man is guilty, we are not come here to solve a problem but to call for justice...... ... I, for myself and for others, make this deliberate determination. I nuncupate this 'solemn and serious vow ....' that we do glow with an immortal hatred against all this corruption."

Hastings behaved during the trial with great composure and dignity. The virulent abuse in which the orators indulged deeply pained him but it did not break his proud spirit. He made no petition for pardon nor did he admit his guilt. He justified every action and the defence he put forward gave evidence of his belief in his own integrity and devotion to public interest. He was acquitted on all counts but the managers had the satisfaction of bringing a great wrong to light.

After the trial he retired to his ancestral house in Dalysford where he died after an illness of several months on 22nd August, 1818, whatever his faults, his name will always rank as one of the founders of British power in India.

Hastings was a great administrator who did much for the organisation and consolidation of the British dominion in India. He did many things that are wrong, things that are hard to justify. Towards Indians of rank and dignity he behaved in a manner which seriously impaired his country's prestige and tarnished his fair name. He was unscrupulous in money matters and went to the length of accepting tributes and presents which were expressly forbidden by his masters. Yet it must be said that in all that he did he was actuated by the desire to serve his country's interests. No other man could have saved the British power from the damages which surrounded it in the eighteenth century. Among the pro-consuls who have served England and India, his name will always rank very high and we cannot find fault with imperialist historians for describing him as the real founder of the British dominion in this country.

CHAPTER XI

Policy of Non-intervention (1786-98)

Appointment of Cornwallis

After the departure of Warren Hastings John Macherson, the senior member of the Council succeeded him. The Court of Directors had offered the Governor-Generalship to Lord Macartney, Governor of Madras, but he declined it. Soon after he reached England and found that it was possible for him to obtain the Governor-Generalship of India. He met Dundas and Pitt and suggested certain changes in Government as the condition of his accepting the office. To these Pitt gave a generel diplomatic approval, "but Lord Macartney's keenness for a British peerage gave offence to the authorities and the matter was dropped. Thus the office was vacant again, and efforts were made to find a suitable person to fill it.

The choice of the Directors fell upon Earl Cornwallis, a seasoned soldier and distinguished nobleman who had taken part in the seven years' war and the war of American Independence. He had declined the office on two previous occasions. In 1782 he had informed Colonel Ross that he was not going to abandon every comfort to quarrel with the Supreme Government in India, that he had neither power to model the army nor to correct abuses and finally to run the risk of being beaten by some Nawab and disagraced eternally. In 1785 he "was again most violently attacked" and pressed to accept the Governor-generalship, but he refused. In the beginning of 1786 the offer was repeated again and this time Cornwallis expressed his desire to acept it provided the offices of Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief were combined in him, and the authority of the Governor-General was enlarged to enable him to avoid the difficulties which had beset Hastings' path at every stage. The Parliament passed an Act (1786) by which the offices of Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief were combined in the same person and the Governor-General was empowered in emergency to act on his authority by overriding the decision of the majority of his Council and to adopt, suspend, or repeal a measure in whole or in nart.

Character of Cornwallis

Thus fortified by Parliamentary enactment, Lord Cornwallis came out to India and it was expected that as the first Governor-General who was sent direct from England he would be able to bring to bear a fresh outlook upon the Indian problems. Unlike Hastings he was a man of great personal probity and integrity and his high sense of public duty was warmly commended in political circles. He was a personal friend of Henry Dundas, President of the Board of Control, and Pitt who had a high opinion of his abilities and character. Though not endowed with genius of a high order nor with much experience of Indian administration like Shore and Grant, he was a conscientious man who yielded to none in his loyalty to his masters and in his desire to carry their plans into effect. His special distinction was his uprightness. He did not care for money and wished to raise, according to his lights, the standard of the country's public service about which he had heard so much in England. He was regarded as a man of principle who was totally averse from regulating his conduct by doctrines fashioned to the varying hour and by having recourse to shifty ways to find money or to advance their personal interests. His largeness of aim, his wide and liberal outlook, his honesty of purpose were qualities which distinguished him from many of his contemporaries.

As a soldier he had learnt the value of obedience and self-discipline and his military training through long years of sustained drudgery enabled him to subordinate his will readily to his superiors. He had utter dislike for petty chicanery and never sanctioned anything that fell short of his high standard. He was devoid of personal ambition and nothing weighed with him so much as the paramount claims of duty done without ostentation or love of gain. He possessed a rare equanimity of temper and was capable of passing through great crises unruffled by disaster or misfortune. Such a man was needed at the helm of the Company's affairs. The entire political system which had grown up in India through British agency was full of abuses. Warren Hastings was a man thoroughly devoted to the public interest, but he was blind to considerations of morality, justice or righteousness. He had allowed corruption to grow to such an extent, that only a man influentially connected at home and possessed of a high character could clean the Augean Stable.

The task before Cornwallis

Cornwallis was the first Governor-General sent out by the Board of Control to carry out the provisions of Pitt's Act: (1) to reorganise the civil and military establishments of the Company;

(2) to enquire into and fully investigate, and if founded effectually redress, the complaints of the Rajas, Zamindars and other native landowners, that they have been unjustly deprived of their lands; jurisdictions, and privileges, or that the tributes, rents and service required to be paid or done by them have become oppressive and grievous; (3) and to refrain from declaring war or entering into treaty with any of the Indian Princes.

The Select Committee of 1781 had emphasised the objects which the Company's government was to keep in mind in future. These were 'security and advantage' for Britain and the happiness of the Indian people. During the years 1781-86 these aims had been reiterated both in and out of Parliament and the reform of the Company's government in India was looked upon as a matter of the highest importance. The instructions to Cornwallis contained the principles which the Indian Government was to follow. The land revenue was to be reorganised and what was to be enforced was "a moderate *Jamma*, regularly and punctually collected" and the rights of the Zamindars were to be carefully defined.

The higher services were still to be manned by Europeans and the natives of India were to be employed in the subordinate branches of the administration.......... a discreditable policy which was founded on prejudice and selfishness but for which the Indians themselves were responsible. The third item in the programme was the reform of the judiciary which was in a chaotic condition. The European ideas of justice were to be enforced but due regard was to be paid to the customs of the Indian people; both Hindu and Muslim. A modern writer thus describes the task which confronted Cornwallis on his arrival in India

> "Abuses of all kinds were to be swept away; peculation was to cease; useless offices were to be reduced, and the interests of economy and simplicity were to regulate the various branches of the administrative system."[1]

Foreign policy

Besides these problems of an admistrative character the Governor-General had to deal with the Indian States who did not like the establishment of the British power and whose hostility was an ever-present factor in the political situation. Before discussing the internal measures of Cornwallis's government an attempt will be made to explain his policy towards the Indian powers:

1. Cambridge, History of India, Vol. V, p. 434.

Relations with Sindhia

For three years after his arrival, Cornwallis was busily engaged in reforming the civil and military departments of the Government. During this period and Macpherson's brief tenure of office Mahadji Sindhia had become a powerful Prince and had acquired a considerable influence in the politics of Delhi. In 1784 the Mughal Emperor had appointed the Peshwa Vakil-i-Mutlaq (Viceregent) and Sindhia had become his deputy. Sindhia demanded arrears of tribute due to the Emperor but Macpherson denied the validity of the claim and insisted on its withdrawal. In 1786 the Peshwa entered into an alliance with the Nizam against Tipu Sultan. By the treaty of Mangalore the English were not to assist the enemies of Tipu but Macpherson promised military aid to the Marathas for defending their possessions against the Lord of Mysore. Cornwallis felt he was bound by Pitt's India Act which pledged him not to enter into hostilities with the Indian Princes. He refused to ratify Macpherson's agreement and incurred the wrath of Nana Fadnavis who is reputed to have said on learning of the Governor-General's decision that "he was greatly pained and shocked at the duplicity of the new Governor".

Settlement with Oudh

Soon after Cornwallis had assumed his exalted office, the Vizier's repersentative Haider Beg Khan waited on him to settle certain matters between the Company and the Vizier's Government. The British complained of the mismanagement of the Vizier's territories and his evasions in making payment to the Company. It is very difficult to establish a fair open line between us, wrote Cornwallis to Dundas and pointed out the difficulties of reaching a satisfactory settlement. The Governor-General assured Haider Beg Khan that the British Government did not want to exploit Oudh for commercial gain but he did not accept this assurance and often quoted the proverb: "whoever has been stung by a snake, is frightened when he sees a rope". Several months were passed in discussion, and the Vizier's minister urged with great insistence the withdrawal of the English force stationed in Oudh for the protection af his dominions. This request was refused on the ground that the internal security of the kingdom would be seriously threatened by taking such a step. After protracted negotiations a settlement was made by which the Vizier was not to be asked to pay more than 50 lakhs for the maintenance of troops stationed in Oudh. As regards interference in the internal affairs of the kingdom Cornwallis assured the Vizier that strict orders shall be sent to the Resident not to interfere in the details of government nor to allow

any British subject to claim exemption from duties or tributes under the authority of the British Government. The Governor-General asked the Vizier not to allow any European to reside in his country without his written permission. This was followed by a commercial treaty with the Vizier in July 1788 by which the power of levying duties was limited.

Relation with the Nizam

According to Pitt's India Act the government of the Company was bound not to declare war against or inter into a treaty with any Indian Prince, and Cornwallis started on his career with the most pacific intentions. In 1788 he refused to assist the son of the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam who was then living at Benares to recover his throne and with difficulty got out of the tangle created by Macpherson in entering into an agreement with the Peshwa. But there were clouds on the horizon which foreshadowed an ominous future and the Governor-General found himself in circumstances which made war inevitable. Tipu was a formidable enemy and though he had made peace with the English at Mangalore, he had not completely abandoned his hostilities towards them. Lord Cornwallis had his fears and, therefore, he wanted to settle relations with the Nizam. Tipu had encroached upon the territories of both the Nizam and the Marathas. When the Marathas appealed to the English for help, the promise made by Macpherson was not kept and the war between the Marathas and Tipu was closed by a peace in 1787 by which the former obtained some territory, the Nizam got Adoni and Tipu was compelled to pay a tribute. Probably Tipu agreed to these humiliating terms for he was afraid lest the English should join his enemies.

Lord Cornwallis judged this a good opportunity for demanding from the Nizam Guntur, a place of great strategical importance in the Northern Circars which were ceded to the Engish in 1759. By the treaty of 1768 it was agreed that the Circar of Guntur should be ceded to the English after the death or misconduct of the Nizam's brother Basalat Jung who occupied it at the time. Basalat Jung died in 1782 and the Company claimed the restoration of the Circar but the Nizam put them off with dilatory pleas. He valued this piece of territory as it was his only outlet to the sea coast and the English also looked upon it as a point of strategic importance between Madras and the other Circars. The Nizam expressed his willingness to surrender Guntur provided the English fulfilled their part of the treaty of 1768 and he required them to arrange for the restoration to him of some territories which had been snatched away from him by Haider Ali. Now, by the treaties of Madras (1769) and Mango-

lore (1784) the territories included in Tipu's dominions had been reorganized by the English and they found it difficult to comply with the Nizam's demand without making a serious breach of treaty obligations. Disappointed at the attitude of the English, the Nizam opened negotiations with Tipu but no understanding could be reached, and both remained suspicious of each other's intentions.

Meanwhile Cornwallis had consulted the Directors on the question of Guntur and they had advised resumption. Captain Kennaway was sent to Haiderabad to demand from the Nizam an immediate surrender of Guntur but before he reached his destination news came that the Raja of Cherika (a petty Prince on the Malabar Coast) had by the order of Tipu begun inroads in the Company's territories and that Tipu was also preparing for an invasion of Travancore. In this situation Cornwallis again decided to proceed slowly; he did not want to offend the Nizam nor did he want to throw him into the arms of Tipu and therefore advised the British envoy to proceed with great caution. The Act of 1784 was another obstacle to the conclusion of an alliance with the Nizam which was necessary if Tipu went to war with the English. Lord Cornwallis by what Roberts calls 'a desparate piece of casuistry' decided to accept the Nizam's demand which he had based on the treaty of 1768. The political situation of the time suggested this somewhat shifty compromise. Cornwallis informed the Nizam that if the territories which he claimed ever came into the possession of the English, they would be restored to him and that the English will help him with forces not to be employed against any power in alliance with the Company. Tipu's name was deliberately excluded from the list of allies. The treaty was made in 1788.

Cornwallis had been much criticised for entering into this treaty. Some have said that it was in violation of the treaties of 1769 and 1784. Sir John Malcolm regarded the course which he pursued not only questionable in point of faith but one which was calculated to produce war with Tipu. Mill found it instructive to see a pacific and righteous statesman acting in contravention of the Act of 1784 by entering into 'a very intelligible offensive alliance.' These opinions are not wholly justified. The policy which Cornwallis followed, was approved by Pitt and Dundas.

Indeed the latter wrote to him :

"It is so very essential to our interest to detach him (Nizam) from all other Indian connections, and to unite him in the closest connection and dependence upon our

protection, that there is no alliance formed upon that basis to which you may not expect our concurrence."[1] The treaty with the Nizam, though not strictly in accordance with the India Act, did not imply any breach of faith with Tipu either. Tipu's interests had been clearly hostile ; he had broken the treaty of Mangalore and committed numerous petty acts of aggression. He had sent an embassy to Paris and despatched secret agents to Pondichery to study the relations between England and France. In the event of war, the relations between the two countries he would try to advance his interests and add to his dominion by seizing the State of Travancore which would furnish him wlth an outlet to the sea. Such were the grounds in which Anglo-Indian historians have justified the policy of Lord Cornwallis."

Third Mysore War, 1790

The State of Travancore is situated on the south-western side of the Deccan Peninsula. The land covered with coconut and palm trees and for miles together one sees the green rice fields which make th's country a veritable Garden of Eden protected on all sides by Nature except in the north where the Ghats act as a tolerably satisfactory rampart. Tipu was anxious to obtain this State. It had been placed under British protection by the treaty of Mangalore. The Raja had purchased from the Dutch two towns Cranganore and Aya Cottah situated at the extremity of the works or lines of fortifications which he and the Raja of Cochin had constructed and which were known as the lines of Travancore. They ran from west to east and consisted of a ditch about 20 feet deep and 16 feet broad. Tipu demanded these towns on the ground that they belonged to the Raja of Cochin who was his tributary and that the Dutch had no right to sell them. There was another cause of Tipu's displeasure. The Raja of Travancore had given shelter to those refugees from Malabar whose extradition was demanded by the Sultan. Besides these immediate causes the hatred between Tipu and the British Government was a determining factor. What the former's British contemporaries must have thought of him may be inferred from the highly overdrawn picture cf Tipu's character and habits furnished by certain modern writers :

"Tipu was a liar so ingrained that he seems never to have risen to perception that a distinction between true and false existed ; he could not see that it might sometimes advantage him to keep his word. His letters to commandars besieging forts would instruct them to offer

> quarter and when quarter had been accepted, butchered everyone irrespective of age and sex. It was impossible to ascertain what captives he held; and as a preliminary, when war broke out, he would murder any who still survived."[1]

On December 14, 1789, Tipu invaded the lines of Travancore and secured the country within a mile of them. He was repulsed but he attacked again with redoubled force and Cornwallis was compelled to declare war in January 1790. The Madras Government was notoriously inefficient. The Governor was suspended and General Medows was appointed to take his place. Cornwallis had already concluded an offensive and defensive alliance with the Nizam and the Marathas on the basis of an equal division of the conquered territories. The treaty with the Nizam was concluded on the 4th of July, 1790 and was ratified by the Governor-General in Council on the 29th. He was suspicious of the Marathas but his mind was put at ease by the British Resident who assured him and his ministers that they would always receive from the Company's Government "the most unequivocal marks of cordiality and friendship". A further assurance was given that whenever an opportunity presented itself, steps would be taken to draw the connexion closer between the two allies, Sir John Malcolm comments upon the policy underlying the treaty in these words :

> "The Nizam co-opted with perfect sincerity in the war against the Sultan; and though the character of his troops and the habits of his Government, prevented the benefit from his aid, which might have been expected from the number of his army, and the extent of his resources, there cannot be a doubt, but that his exertions, however ill-conducted, contributed in a considerable degree the happy to termination of a war, which indeed could never have been carried upon such a scale without his assistance."[2]

The treaty with the Poona Court was also an offensive and defensive alliance against Tipu. It was signed with the Peshwa on the 1st June and ratified by the Governor—General in Council on the 5th July, 1790. The conditions of the treaty were the same as that of the treaty with the Nizam. Prior to the

1. Thompson and Garret, Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India, p. 176.
2. Malcolm, Sketch of the Political History of India, p. 76.

conclusion of the alliance Cornwallis had pointed out to the Court of Poona the objects he had in view in fighting this war. The first was the indemnification for the losses sustained by the Company either in preparations or military operations. The second object was to oblige Tipu to restore all territories which he or his father had usurped from either of the two powers as well and to force him to surrender that part of the Carnatic which was in his possession and to free the Nairs of Malabar whom he had treated with 'shocking barbarity'.

Fortified by these alliances Lord Cornwallis proceeded to carry on the war with the utmost vigour.

Meadows opened the campaign but it proved indecisive: The Marathas helped and captured Dharwar but the Nizam was inactive. Tipu made a dashing raid marching for Serangapatam through the Carnatic and reached Trichinopoly. He ravaged the island of Seringham on which was situated the famous temple with its battlements and towers. Cornwallis himself assumed the command in person in 1791 and the reasons why he did so he stated in a letter dated November 20, 1790 to Dundas.

"That we have lost time, and our adversary has gained reputation, which are two most valuable things in war. It is vain to look back ; we must only consider how to remedy the evil, and to prevent the ill-effects which our delay may occasion in the minds of our allies. It immediately occurred to me that nothing would be so likely to keep up their spirits, and to convince them of our determination to act with vigour, as my taking command of the army."[1]

Cornwallis advanced with his force towards Vellore, about eighty miles from Madras, and from there entered the Mysore plateau by the Muglee pass and captured Bangalore (1791) after a determined resistance by Tipu's forces.

As the town was an important possession of Tipu, he made a desperate attempt to recover it but in vain. There was a bloody and obstinate struggle ; the Mysoreans fought bravely defending their altars, hearths and houses with the courage of martyrs but they were repulsed by the British. They lost about 300 men and in despair returned to their camp.

The fortress of Bangalore was stormed and the garrison suffered heavy losses. The Qiladar Bahadur Khan who did his utmost to drive back the assailants was among the slain. His

1. Forrest, Selections from State Papers I, p. 61.

dead body lay on the rampart in all its glory like that of Sir John Moore on the battlefield of Corunna and was visited by every one in the army and all who saw it were deeply impressed by the nobleness and majesty of its appearance. The brave man was buried with military honours which he richly deserved.

Though the British had captured the fortress, they were much troubled by want of forage and grain and it was felt necessary to move to a place where men and cattle could find the means of satisfying hunger. More success followed and the fortresses of Deohali and little Balipur surrendered to Cornwallis without offering any resistance. The British army was at this time joined by 10,000 cavalry of the Nizam who were not well-equipped for fight. It marched towards Bangalore again and reached there on April 28,1791. Cornwallis now determined to advance upon Seringapatam, Tipu's capital, and intended to terminate the war quickly by capturing it. The direct route was strongly blocked by Tipu. A more northerly route was barred by well-garrisoned fortresses and therefore a southerly route was chosen. But the path was rugged and stony, full of ravines and rivulets and the troops suffered a great deal. There was scarcity of food and fodder also ; the villages had been destroyed by Tipu's orders and the misery of the British army was unendurable. While the army was moving towards Seringapatam, another British force under Abercoombie advanced from the west coast to join it. At Kerighatta the English won a victory over the Mysoreans but incessant rain and shortage of supplies prevented them from reaping the full advantage of it. Cornwallis advised retreat and would have been in a timely arrival of a Maratha force under Hari Punt and Paras Ram Bhao. The junction of the Marathas and the English alarmed Tipu and in customary fashion he sent out a flag of truce, accompanied by a numerous retinue of servants bringing trays of fruit! The flag and the fruits were returned and Cornwallis informed Tipu that he could not make peace with him except in concert with the Nizam and the Marathas who were the allies of the British. The fact is that the English had a great dislike for Tipu and were determined to fight to the bitter end. The war dragged on and the English captured Nundidurg and several other fortresses. The Marathas engaged themselves in plunder and at times suffered reverses at the hands of Tipu's generals.

Next year Cornwallis resumed the campign at the head of a large army. He was fully supported by the Government in England. The House of Commons had approved of the war and the Company had resolved to send out £ 5,00,000 to enable the Governor-General to carry on the war. The allies of the British joined them and rendered full help. Tipu placed himself at the

head of the forlorn hope of Mysore and prepared to give battle to his foes. Cornwallis advanced on Seringapatam to which he laid seige in February 1792. Tipu's men rained fireupon the besiegers again and again but the lack of ammunition proved a serious handicap. Seeing no chance of success Tipu offered terms of peace but higglings went on for a long time and then Cornwallis dictated the terms which were accepted by Tipu. He was asked to cede one-half of his dominion, to pay three crores and 30 lakhs as indemnity and to surrender histwo elder sons as hostages for the due fulfilment of the treaty. Tipu did not send his eldest son and two young boys who were treated very generously by Lord Cornwallis. The envoy who escorted the childran to the British camp addressed the General in these words: "These children were this morning the sons of the Sultan, My master: their situation is now changed, and they must look up to your Lordship as their father Cornwallis received them with distinguished courtesy and treated them like his own sons.

Tipu saw clearly that nothing was to be gained by protracting the negotiations and in March 1792 he put his signature to the Treaty of Seringapatam.

Treaty of Seringapatam

By this treaty Tipu lost one-half of his dominion. The revenue of the entire ceded territory was estimated at £ 1,135,029 and as the prize was to be equally divided, the share of each ally amounted to £ 395,000. The English received as their portion the Baramahal, the Salem Country, Dindigal and Malabar. The strip of land on Malabar coast was very valuable, for it contained the ports of Cannanore and Calicut. All these districts were added to the Bombay Presidency the importance of which was considerably increased.

The share of the Marathas consisted in the districts situated in the north and west which extended from the Krishna to a large tract of land below the Tungabhadra.

As in the case of the Marathas the acquisitions of the Nizam were contiguous to his own territories and extended from the Krishna to the Panna river and included the forts of Cadapa and Gunjikotah.

The Raja of Coorg who had helped the British, was rescued from Tipu's tyranny and placed under British protection. This was an advantage to the English for Coorg was regarded as the door to Seringapatam. The importance of this cession can be gauged from the act that when the proposal was made to Tipu, his wrath was excited. According to Wilks he is reported to have asked "To which of the English possessions is Coorg adjacent?

Why do they not ask for the key of Seringapatam ? They know that I would sooner have died in the breach than consent to such a cession, and durst not bring it forwards until they had treacherously obtained possession of my children and my treasure."

Besides the cession of territory Tipu had to pay three crores and thirty lakhs of rupees to be paid either in gold mohars, pagodai or bullions. Half of this was to be paid at once and the other half in three instalments.

The war resulted in adding 20,000 sq. miles to British territory and the Nizam and the Peshwa entered into a defensive alliance against Tipu by which they bound themselves jointly to guard the territories they had obtained.

Lord Cornwallis behaved generously towards the troops. Out of the prize money he granted them a gratuity equal to six months' Bhatta (about 22 lakhs of rupees). The Court of Directors approved of the measure and suggested a more generous distribution to recognize their services. Lord Cornwallis gave up his share of the prize money as Commander-in-Chief which amounted to £ 42,244. This was quite unlike Warren Hastings who seldom resisted monetary gifts.

The Governor-General received the title of Marquis for his able management of the war and the citizens of Madras expressed their thankfulness to him by erecting his statue which now stands in the hall of the Connemara Public Library.

The treaty of Seringapatam suggests a few reflections. Lord Cornwallis was accused of being half-hearted inasmuch as he did not capture Seringapatam and extinguish Tipu's power. Some said he had taken too much while others held the view that he had not done enough to curb his ambition. Tipu's fury and rage still burst with a flame and was likely to disturb the peace of South India again. Medows had actually suggested Tipu's deposition and the restoration of the Hindu family whom Haider Ali had deprived of its ancient patrimony. But this would have been a violation of Pitt's Act and would have offended public opinion in England. The annexation of the whole kingdom was also highly impolitic for that would have, as Cornwallis said, clearly made a settlement with the allies difficult. The absorption of Mysore into the British dominions would have entailed responsibilities which would have added much to the discomfort of the English.

Cornwallis was more prudent than his critics. As he said himself, his object was not to destroy the power of Tipu but to check his power of aggression, to establish peace in the country by restoring the balance of power which in the eighteenth century

even in the Europe was looked upon as the height of political civilisation and wisdom. It was felt at the time that if Tipu had been deprived of his whole kingdom, it would have led to serious complications which might have resulted in another war. The present arrangements satisfied all. They satisfied the Nizam and the Marathas who were assured of British help against Tipu's aggressions in future. Cornwallis prettily summed up the position in his letter to Dundas: 'We have effectually crippled our enemy without making our friends too formidable'.

In doing all this Cornwallis consulted the real interests of the Company and for this reason desired to impose 'such conditions as should put it out of the Sultan's power to disturb the peace of India'. Whether this purpose was effectually attained or not is another question. Wilks' answer is not far from the truth:

> "The evidence of subsequent events will probably be deemed to amount to a negative answer, but candour cannot fail to add, that if, under the political circumstances of the moment the entire extinction of the Mysorean power were really inexpedient, no further reduction of that power could have been attempted without the imminent risk of being forced into the extreme alternative."[1]

The success of the English in this war was due not so much to superior generalship as to the cooperation of the Indian powers. Tipu was a formidable fighter and in Forrest's State Papers there is ample evidence of the valour and heroism shown by the Mysoreans. But the lack of unity and national feeling paralysed Indian resistance and when children of the soil, hopelessly incompetent to settle their own differences, chose to throw their weight on the side of the foreigner, what hope was there of the safety and independence of Indian kingdom? One of the grimmest ironies of history is — - and it persists to this day——that no defeat or disaster at the hands of a foreign foe could teach India's numerous princes and magnates a lesson in political wisdom.

Intervention of Cornwallis. A dispute of succession in Tanjore drew the attention of the Governor-General. The English at first supported Amar Singh the usurper, with whom they made a treaty in 1787 and obtained from him the Dewani of his territories. When his rival Serfoji appealed to them for help, his request was complied with and he was regarded as the rightful Raja.

1. Wilks' South of India, III, p. 253.

In 1792 Muhammad Ali Nawab of Carnatic, who was over-head and ears in debt, entered into a fresh treaty with the Company and offered to the English the administration of a British force. The aged and decrepit Nawab failed to satisfy the greed of those who managed his affairs and the condition of his country grew from bad to worse.[1]

The last acts of Cornwallis were his invasions of Nepal and Assam. War had broken out between Nepal and China and the fear of the latter led the Nepalese to sign a commercial treaty with the English. By this treaty traders from British India were granted certain privileges and a duty of 2½% was to be levied on goods imported on either side. The Gurkhas asked for help against China which Lord Cornwallis refused on the ground that China was a friendly power. But he expressed his willingness to mediate between the two powers and sent a mission under Colonel Kirkpatrick but before he reached Nepal, peace had been made between the Chinese and the Gurkhas. The latter hastily informed Kirkpatrick of the cessation of hostilities and asked him to go back. But he went on and reaching Kathmandu was well received by the Nepalese Government. He tried to start negotiations but all attempts failed. So distrustful were the Gurkhas of the English that they resolutely determined to shut out their intrusion.

The ruler of Assam deposed and he sought the help of Cornwallis. Captain Walsh was sent at the head of 1,100 sepoys to reinstate the deposed Raja but the latter turned out an imbecile and no sooner did Walsh leave the country than one of the local Chiefs established his power.

These were the last acts of Cornwallis's administration. In 1793 he retired and was succeeded by Sir John Shore.

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1. The Nawab's debts arose out of his dealings with the Company's servants. They advanced him money and got from him assignments of land revenue. This was collected by them with the result that they oppressed the people and ruined the country. The interest on the loans advanced by those men was usurious sometimes rising to 48%. A certain junior servant of the Company. Paul Benefield once applied to the Madras Council for help in recovering from the Nawab the sum of Rs. 2,30,000. This led to much corruption in which even members of Parliament shared. Cornwallis tried to stop the evil. He refused to grant promotion to servants of the Company who had any claims against the Nawab and forced Benefield to sail for England. The debts of the Nawab were liquidated by instalments.

What was the condition of India when Cornwallis left the country? The Mughal Emperor was a puppet in the hands of Sindhia. Oudh was misgoverned and the Nawab of Bengal was poor and helpless. The Maratha Confederacy was afflicted with rivalries. Its history during the last 20 years of the eighteenth century was that of the struggle for power between Mahadji Sindhia and Nana Fadnis. Both were able and astute statesmen, capable of taking a long view of the situation and were endowed with a keen sense of political realism. Tipu was burning with revenge and the Nizam and the Marathas were full of suspicions and a rupture between them was seriously feared. After Sindhia's death (1794) the Maratha confederates formed a grand coalition and gave a short shrift to the Nizam who had the mortification of being abandoned by his erstwhile allies, the English. The Chief of the Carnatic was an indolent prince who neglected his administration and did nothing to promote the welfare of his subjects. The whole country was distracted by rivalries and feuds which were going ultimately to end in the accession of the English to the foremost position in Indian politics.

Administrative Reforms. When Macpherson assumed charge of the Governor-Generalship, the financial system of Bengal was entirely unsatisfactory. There was no cash in the treasury with which to pay the salaries of the troops. To meet this difficulty he issued certificates bearing interest at 8 per cent. until they were cashed. All civil servants drawing a salary of more than Rs. 300 per month were to be paid with these certificates. He effected retrenchment in the civil and military departments of the Company and thereby encouraged the very abuses which he was anxious to prevent. He took great care of the revenue Collectors and entrusted the task to Jonathan Duncan who was an expert in revenue matters. He abolished seven collectorships and three district civil courts and reduced salaries. This caused much discontent and the Collectors sent a protest to the Board. The Committee of revenue was dissolved and in its place was created a Board of Revenue. The Directors approved of the plan and it was carried into effect. Macpherson did not like the idea of the same officer entrusted with the collection of revenue and the administration of justice. He did not like the idea of centralising the revenue administration of the Presidency and favoured the appointment of Collectors in the districts.

Macpherson's administration was thoroughly unpopular. Cornwallis on his arrival did not find a single person who did not condemn it. Shore wrote though not without exaggeration:

> "Never was any administration so thoroughly irresponsible as his; a total want of energy, dignity and common-

> sense destroyed it. Evasion was no substitute for decision; caution and hesitation instead of action. Cornwallis who endorsed Shore's view described Macpherson as 'certainly the most contemptible and the most condemned governor that ever pretended to govern'."[1]

Cornwallis atonce plunged himself into the task of reform. In 1787 the Directors accepted the retention of the system of collection but sanctioned the reduction of their number. The Collectorships were reduced from 36 to 23, but the officials who were retrenched were given a subsistence until they got another job. The Collectors were not allowed to engage in private trade and to enable them to live with dignity, according to their status, their salary was raised to Rs. 1,500 a month and they were entitled to a commission on the collections. Cornwallis's view was that addition to salaries will stimulate ambition and act as an incentive to good work. The Directors disapproved of the additional allowances and Cornwallis emphatically repudiated the statement that in an Eastern country whatever the pay; the officials will certainly take bribes. 'Responsibility, he said, must be paid for, or the official will abuse his trust.'

But to reform the Company's service was not an easy task. Corruption was rife and love of money was rampant among all classes of the Company's servants. The vast fortunes carried by those who set themselves up as 'Nabobs' in England completely demoralised the members of the services who came to look upon India as their milch cow and were anxious to make as much as they could during their stay in this country. In trying to gain this object all other considerations, the interest of the Company, of the people and the dictates of morality and humanity were thrown to the winds. Even the very highest were not above reproach and freely accepted bribes. Cornwallis sought to lessen corruption by paying adequate salaries consisting purely of fixed payments and partly of commissions. In his letter to the Directors dated August 2, 1789, he said:

"The salaries ought to be liberal... ....It is neither your expectation, nor would it be possible, to obtain the services of men of experience, ability and character, in this climate where the continuation of health is so precarious, without granting them reward in some shape sufficiently liberal to live in a decent and comfortable manner and to make such annual savings as to give them a prospect of being able in a moderate number of years to return to spend the latter part of their day in easy circumstances

1. Fifth Report on East India Affairs, II, p. XII.

at home." He urged upon the Home Government the desirability of considering the whole question and warned them that "the toleration of perquisites must undermine the discipline of the service". It was after considerable reluctance that the Directors finally agreed to depart from their traditional policy and establish adequate salaries for their servants.

Another source of corruption was the patronage exercised by the Proprietors and Directors of the Company. So far the Company's service had been the close preserve of the relations of the Directors and others connected with the management of the whole system. Applicants for posts in India were supported by the English personages in England, by the King, the Queen, the nobles and other dignatories, both lay and ecclesiastical, who looked upon the Company's service as a paradise to which their friends and relatives should be sent. Lord Cornwallis did not like these recommendations and resolutely set his face against them. He resisted even the Prince of Wales and wrote to Lord Southampton :

"I can assure you that I read it with the greatest concern, as it made me apprehend what would be very painful to me, that I should appear backward and disinclined to exercise any commands that His Royal Highness might think proper to honour with." In regard to a letter received from the Queen he wrote to Viscount Sydney, one of the Secretaries of State :

"I cannot desert the only system that can save the country, even for sacred Majesty." Again he wrote in 1788: 'I am still persecuted every day by people coming out with letters to me, who either get into jail or starve in the foreign settlements. For God's sake, do all in your power to stop this madness." On one occasion he rebuked even Dundas for recommending a certain candidate for a post in the administration. He made it quite clear that he would not indulge in the common administrative vice, not confined to India, of creating officers or extra offices'.

It was by adopting such attitude that Lord Cornwallis was able to put a stop to this evil and was able to establish a fairly honest and disciplined service. Even after making some allowance for the partisan outlook of Shore it is possible to concede some element of faith in his remark about the happiness of the people at large resulting from the security which they possess under our Government, and from which we see an increase of population and industry.[1]

1. Life of Lord Taignmouth, pp. 328-29.

It is, however, deplorable that Cornwallis came to the conclusion that European character was superior to Indian and justified the exclusion of Indians from all services of any consequence. Writing to the Directors on August 18, 1787, he remarked:

"I think it must be universally admitted that without a large and well-regulated body of Europeans, our hold of the valuable dominions must be very insecure".[1] It may be as Sir John Kaye suggests, that Cornwallis feared lest the natives should become a very effective instrument in the hands of the Europeen, and therefore decided not to mix up the two agencies. This unjust decision of Cornwallis inaugurated the monopoly of higher posts by Europeans which in course of time created vested interest and a prejudice against the reversal of the system. Very often Europeans of very inferior calibre and ignorant of the elements of the science of administration which they were unable to discharge, were appointed while capable Indians were shut out from all share in the business of Government and were left without any worthy object of ambition. In a country like India where admission to Government service confers upon the entrant a special respectability, the hardships and heart-burning which this exclusion must have caused to numerous Indians cannot be over-estimated. There is no doubt that the efficiency of Government must have suffered for want of the services of the indigenous element.

Another measure of Cornwallis about the services related to the administration of the Police. At that time the Police administration was carried on by the Zamindars who with the help of a large number of low paid officers maintained law and order in the villages and protected the life and property of the inhabitants. They were bound to apprehend all offenders, and if they could neither recover the property stolen, nor seize the robber, they were liable to make good the loss of the person who was deprived of the goods. This system was not new. It was introduced by Sher Shah towards the middle of the sixteenth century. But like most oriental institutions it had fallen into decay and disorder. Cornwallis abolished the police establishment of the Zamindars and substituted for it the Company's police, thus accepting what must be the primary duty of every civilised State. Police circles or thanas with an average area of twenty miles square were established with a Daroga in-charge who was appointed by the District Officer. The Daroga had power to accept bail in certain cases and in certain classes of petty offences, he was empowered to decide atonce. The village Chowkidars, however, continued to be appointed by the Zamindars, though

1. Rose, Cornwallis Correspondence, Vol. II, p. 203.

they were placed under the thana officers. On Mr. Duncan's recommendation the Province of Benares was excluded from this system.

The condition of the Company's army was unsatisfactory and Cornwallis was shocked to see the inefficacy but the infantry was in a wretched condition and this was due to defective recruiting in Europe. Cornwallis suggested that recruits should be publicly obtained and kept under close watch until they were sent to India. Dundas agrees that a regular system of recruiting was highly desirable and disapproved of the practice which prevailed.

Cornwallis held that the British hold on India would not be strong or permanent if the army consisted of 'native' elements. "Even the best of traditions" said he would not conciliate men differing from the British in every respect. It would not be wise to depend on the natives to secure their subjection.". Time has shown how ill-ground were the fears of Cornwallis who had no knowledge of Indian character.

Judicial Reforms. Lord Cornwallis completely re-organised the judicial system of Bengal and issued a Code of laws under the name of Regulations. Regulation I in the Cornwallis Code related to the declaration of the Perpetual Settlement. The other Regulations introduced important changes in the judiciary which was in a chaotic state: Hastings had established a civil and a criminal court in each district and Sadar Adalats at Calcutta, each for civil and criminal cases. The Supreme Court established by the Regulation Act represented a class by itself and could hardly be included in any really useful judicial system of the country. However the friction between the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and Hastings' judiciary was constant though for a time it was stopped in 1780 by the appointment of Sir Elijah Impey, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, as the head of the Sadar Dewani Adalat. The Collector also performed judicial duties in addition to his revenue work and held a court known as *Mal Adalat* in which he decided all cases regarding the rights of the landholders and cultivators, and all claims arising between them and their servants. The criminal justice was in the hands of Indians under the direction of a Naib Nazim and was in a most unsatisfactory state. This office was held by Muhammad Reza Khan who appointed the judges of the District Courts. The salary of the judges was low, not more than Rs. 100 a month and the Collector reported that the judges' salaries were inadequate. Sometimes they were in arrears and were not paid for three or four months. The judge possessed great authority which was governed by caprice. He could be severe or lenient as

he chose and in deciding cases took no account of merit. The Muhammedan law was the Code which guided the courts in the disposal of criminal cases and punishments were often disproportionate to the guilt of the accused person. The law of evidence was not defined and injustice often resulted from for want of a regular procedure. Still the law of Abu Hanifa was superior to the Western laws which prevailed in Europe in the eighteenth century and as Hastings said it was based 'on the most elementary principle and an abhorrence of bloodshed'.

Corwallis saw these grave defects of the judicial system and said with reference to criminal justice :

> "......... I feel myself called upon...... to take measures to prevent in future, on the one hand the cruel punishment of mutilation,..... and on the other to restrain the spirit of corruption which so generally prevails in native courts....... I conceive that it will be indispensable for the good government of this country, that there should be general jail deliveries once or twice a year, and that two or three respectable Company's servants should be selected to act as Superintendents of the criminal trials, which may be conducted under their inspection, by native judges, with the assistance of learned Maulvis and Pandits in strict conformity to the laws and customs of Hindustan."[1]

The reform of criminal justice was undertaken by Lord Cornwallis, during the years 1790-92. He did not trust Indians and wanted to remove them from the Criminal Courts. Muhammad Reza Khan was dismissed and the Nizamat Adalat which was henceforward to consist of the Governor-General and members of the Supreme Council, assisted by the Chief Qazi of the Province and two Muftis was removed from Murshidabad to Calcutta. The District Courts were also reorganized. The existing Faujdari Courts were abolished and their place was taken by four Provincial Courts, three for Bengal and one for Behar. The judges of these courts were made judges of circuit who were to go round the districts. Two jail deliveries were to be effected every year. After completing the circuit of these districts the judges were to reside at Divisional headquarters, i. e., Calcutta, Dacca, Murshidabad and Patna. European British subjects were excluded from the jurisdiction of these Courts; they are to be tried by the Supreme Court of judicature at Calcutta. The law of evidence was improved and a Muslim

1. Ramsay, Muir, Cornwallis's Correspondence, pp. 194-95.

guilty of murder could be convicted on the evidence of non-Muslims.

After sometime when it was found that the four Courts of Circuit could not cope with the business that come up before them, it was decided in Feburary 1792 to authorise the Magistrates to try all petty cases of theft and to give pecuniary assistance to witnesses who appealed before them to give evidence. In July 1792 a small allowance of not more than Rs. 5 per month was granted to prisoners who were released from jail and who, it was feared, might again resort, for want of employment to their criminal habits. The practice of attaching the property of under-trial prisoners was abolished and the professional informers employed by the Police were discontinued for they frequently gave trouble to the relatives of the culprits.

The reform of civil justice received equal attention from the Governor-General. The Cornwallis Code made ample provision for improvement. Cornwallis was convinced that the separation of executive and judicial powers was a necessity. By Regulation II of 1793 the revenue courts were abolished and the Collector and the Board of Revenue were deprived of all judicial powers. They were confined merely to the collection of public dues and the cognizance of causes was transferred from them to the Courts of Justice. Dewani Courts were established in the districts 'and the judge thereof was to have cognizance over civil causes of all descriptions that may arise in his jurisdiction, whether of the nature of those termed as revenue causes, and those which hitherto have tried in Revenue Courts, or of the description of those which had been cognizable in the courts of Dewani Adalat.' Each of these courts was to be a covenanted civil servant of the Company, with native assessors to advise him in matters of Hindu and Muhammedan laws. Above these courts were the Provincial Courts of Appeal at Patna, Dacca, Murshidabad and Calcutta. These courts were Courts of Appeal and Revision and were in certain cases invested with original jurisdiction also. Each Court of Appeal consisted of three English judges whose decrees were final in suits of personal property those decrees, whose valuation did not exceed one thousand rupees. Appeals from the decisions of these Courts in certain cases were to be heard by the Sadar Dewani Adalat at Calcutta which was presided over by the Governor-General. The final Court of Appeal was the Privy Council in all causes involving more than fifty thousand rupees.

Other Regulations were made for the better trial of cases. Suitors who could not conduct their own cases were allowed to employ Hindu and Muslim Vakils or pleaders and their fees were determinrd by the valuation of the suit. Rules were made for

taking the evidence of Hindu and Muslim women who observed the *purdah*. To expedite the trial of cases qualified Hindus and Muslims were appointed to hear causes involving not more than fifty rupees. The decisions of these Commissioners were appealable to the Dewani Adalat. Hitherto the revenue offices were amenable to any court of justice for acts done in their official capacity and as this resulted in great hadship to the people. Regulation III provided that Government officers were personally liable for damages decreed against them by a civil court for acts authorised by the Regulations. To protect the people against the misbehaviour of Europeans, the regulations did not allow British subjects other than the King's Officers and covenanted servants to reside beyond ten miles of Calcutta unless they had entered into an agreement to submit to the jurisdiction of the District Courts in civil actions brought against them by Indians. Those who refused to do so were forced back to Calcutta. A complete code of Regulations was issued for the guidauce of courts to prevent the exercise of arbitrary authority.[1]

The Cornwallis Code effected some improvement in the administration of justice but it was not without serions defects. The Courts were burdened with a highly technical procedure which meant delay and defeated the ends of justice. The agency employed was foreign and it was impossible for it to understand the sentiments, habits and customs of the people. The Regulations were clumsily drafted and the principles which they embodied were borrowed from the English law and were not wholly applicable to Indian conditions. Cornwallis wanted 'to make everything as England did'. He had too much faith in Codes and Courts of Justice for the prevention of tyranny and injustice and here again he was misled by his experience of English life and society. It was found afterwards that the Collector could grant speedy redress to the poor people against the high-handedness or exactions of their betters. The judges were exclusively Europeans and in 1817 Munro said of them that they were as ignorant of Indian conditions as if they had never left England.

Cornwallis was satisfied only with measures which in his opinion were calculated to advance the property of the people. He took no account of their self-respect and openly dubbed them as corrupt men lacking in capacity, character and integrity. The Indians in his system were denied a share in the business of government and thus their power of initiative and independent action was seriously impaired. Nor was public business transa-

1. An abstract of the 48 Regulations which comprise the Cornwallis Code is given in Note A to Chapter IV of 'Cornwallis in Bengal' by Aspinall (pp. 95-98).

acted in a manner likely to inspire confidence or to raise the standard of the administration. Forrest highly commends the Code 'for establishing in an oriental land the supremacy of law and the law courts over all persons whatever, the foundation of all civil liberty'. But he forgets that a mere declaration of the sovereignty of law in theory does not mean the same thing as its application to the life of institutions and the practice of courts. The people were dragged before courts of justice and harassed by a procedure which was administrated by ignorant judges. The results ascribe to the Cornwallis Code have not been realised in our country even to this day.

Aspinall's remarks on the effects of the Code are well worth quoting:

> "The exclusion of the people from all effective share of the government of their country was almost without a parallel in the history of imperialism. Other conquerors, said Munro, had treated their subjects with insolence and cruelty, but none had ever treated them with such scorn as had the British; had stigmatised a whole nation as unworthy of trust, incapable of honourable conduct, and fit to be employed only in menial situations. Subjection to a foreign yoke was still further calculated to destroy the natural character and to extinguish natural spirit. The Cornwallis system, therefore, was calculated to debase rather than uplift the people fallen under the Company's dominion. It took a whole generation of Indian civilians to discover that such a system was not only ungenerous and unworthy of the British people but impolitic. There was no incentive to self-improvement, intellectual and morally, when all to which even the ablest men could aspire in the service of the Company was some petty position in either the revenue or judicial line gave them neither social position, nor wealth, nor honour. In the military line, too, none could attain to any rank above that of a Subedar, which was as inferior to an ensign to a Commander-in Chief ....For long the question was ignored whether it ought not to be the policy of the Company's Government to improve the character as well as the economic condition of the people." [1]

The Cornwallis Code held the field for 20 years and it was during this period that its defects became clearly manifest. Gradually the esteem in which that Code was held tended to

1. Aspinall, Cornwallis in Bengal, pp. 174-75.

diminish and men began to perceive not only the mischief of words but also of its practical writing. The Cambridge History of India records the following verdict :

> "The great fault of his system was that he confounded courts of justice with justice itself. In a land where the laws were still vague and unknown, and the new system of administration was alien to the ideas of the natives, the multiplication of court-made justice was no advantage in itself. In theory, the Indians were protected by courts of justice from the oppression of officials. Zamindars and taluqdars against Revenue Collectors, *ryots* against Zamindars. But the same courts were both unsuited and inadequate for the task. Delays were so serious that suits, it was said, were not decided in the normal course of a life-time. Protection of this kind was not of much value, and without the gravest unconcern for the welfare of the people, it was impossible to disregard the need for reform."[1]

Land revenue system. The most important reform of Cornwallis was the reorganisation of the land system of Bengal. It is an error to think that the idea of revenue reform emanated from him and that he was sent to impose on Bengal a system of landed proprietorship like the system of English landlordism.[1a] The idea was first adumbrated in Pitt's India Act which directed that permanent rules for the lands, rents and tributes should be made but these rules should be framed according to the circumstance of the various rajas, Zamindars, polygars, taluqdars and other native land-holders and "according to the laws and constitutions of India". The dispatch of the Court of Directors dated April 12,1786 honestly tried to give effect to what it termed the 'true spirit' and "the humane intentions of the Act". It suggested no rules based on British practice. It ordered the settlement to be made as far as possible with the Zamindar and only in special

1a. Sir William Hunter expresses the same view. He writes : "The Permanent Settlement of Bengal was neither consciously nor unconsciously an imitation of the English system of landed property. Lord Cornwallis carried out in good faith and with due care and caution, the injunction of Pitt's Act of 1784 and the intentions of the Court of Directors based thereon in 1786, to establish permanent rules for the land revenue, according to the laws and the Constitution of India."

2. Bengal Records, Vol. I, p. 45.

cases it permitted the alternative of making it with a revenue farmer.

In a predominantly agricultural country like India where the bulk of the government revenue is derived from land, the land settlement is an important matter. It is very important now; it was still more so in the early days of the Company's rule.

The work, however, requires enormous labour and intimate knowledge of land, the people and agriculture. No one who has not been personally in touch with agriculture can ever understand exactly its nature. Difficult as it is, the work of settlement is rendered still more complicated by the customs, usages and the habits of the people which govern land tenures and which adjust the rights of the various classes that have an interest in the soil.

When the Company took over the Dewani, its servants were entirely ignorant of all revenue affairs with the result that they failed to appreciate the difficulties of the people of the country. Sometimes they were deceived by the people but often they made exorbitant exactions to the great detriment of agriculture. This was one of the chief causes of misgovernment in Bengal. It caused untold suffering during the period of the Dual Government (1765-72) and the quinquinnial settlement of Hastings which came at the end of it did not improve matters. The revenue was collected and paid by farmers who had obtained their leases as the highest bidders at a public auction. Many of these were adventurers and had no interest in land except money and therefore practised all kinds of extortions on the cultivators, while they displeased the old collectors who held the office by hereditary right and had been connected with land for a long time. This new instrument of oppression. coming as it did after a famine, in Beveridge's words did not expedite recovery; rather it threatened a return to a state of nature. Hastings, who was not satisfied with this state of affairs wanted a long-term settlement while Philip Francis was in favour of making it permanent but he could not persuade the Council to accept this view. The Directors effected compromise and suggested annual settlement with the Zamindars. The annual settlement, however, had its disadvantages. The revenue collection of Government from year to year was uncertain and a great difficulty was experienced in framing the budget. Secondly, the Government demand fell heavily on the Zamindars for the tendency was to increase the demand and thus many old families were ruined.

Such was the state of affairs when Cornwallis came out as Governor-General. He had the opportunity to benefit by the

experience of Sir John Shore who was appointed to the Calcutta Council and sailed in the same vessel with him. Shore was originally like Warren Hastings a clerk in the Company's service on an annual salary of Rs. 96 which he eked out by other means and when Clive's regulations limited the facilities enjoyed by the Company's servants he spoke of him as "Lord Clive of infamous memory". He rose to high office by dint of hard work and became known for his abilities and wide experience. After a month of his arrival Cornwallis wrote of him : "The abilities of Mr. Shore and his knowledge in every branch of the business of the country, and the very high character which he holds in the settlement, render his assistance to me invaluable." He felt happy that he had such a distinguished officer to assist him. Another man who could give him help was James Grant, another officer in the Company's service who was a specialist in revenue matters. In 1786 he was appointed Chief Sarishtadar to the Board of Revenue and in this capacity he made a close study of revenue records. Even Shore who would consult no less than four different texts of the *Ain-i-Akbari* to make sure of his facts and figures, admired the indefatigable industry and patience of Grant who based his figures on twenty volumes of Persian records.

After Cornwallis's arrival in the beginning of 1787 circular letters were addressed to District Officers asking them to submit reports on the working of the revenue system in their jurisdiction. They were asked to pay special attention to three questions:

1. With whom was the Settlement to be made ?

2. What was to be the amount of Assessment ?

3. Whether the Permanent Settlement was to be made at once or gradually ?

Connected with these was also the question of making rules for guarding the cultivator from the oppression of the Zamindar or the under-farmer of the land tax. The first question was not easy to settle for there were several classes of claimants in the field. There were the Zamindars, the taluqdars, the revenue farmers, military and other holders of lands and those who held land either free of revenue or at a low land tax for charitable, educational or religious purposes such as lands attached to temples, Pathshalas, mosques and other philanthropic institutions. Opinion was divided on the question. Shore agreed that the Zamindars were the proprietors of land subject to the payment of revenue to Government. Grant held a different view and said that Zamindars were merely agents of Government for the collec-

tion of revenue and they were entitled to a share of the proceeds as their wages. In a voluminous Minute dated the 18th June 1789 Shore discussed the whole thing and made out a strong case for dealing with Zamindars as the actual proprietors of the soil on grounds of both policy and expediency.[1] The main principles stated by Shore were the security of the Government with respect to its revenues, and the security and protection of its subjects. He hoped to accomplish the former by concluding a Permanent Settlement with the Zamindars or proprietors of the soil and the second by carrying into practice, as far as possible, an acknowledged maximum of taxation. The settlement was to be made in the first instance for ten years certain, but with a view bo permanency. The conclusions of Mr. Shore were not accepted tby Sir Thomas Munro, who, with his experience of the *ryotwari* system of Madras advocated similar measure for Bengal. The Fifth and Sixth Reports of the Select Committee of the House of Commons likewise condemned the conclusions of Shore. Lord Cornwallis and the Home Government, however, accepted the recommendation of Shore in favour of the Zamindars. In an able Minute dated September 18, 1789, the Governor-General said:

1. Shore's Minutes are to be found in the Fifth Report on East India Affairs, 1812, Vol. II, pp. 1-119, 478-510 and pp. 515-18. The first of these is the most important;

Shore has discussed at length in this Minute the rights and position of Zamindari in Bengal.

He said : "I consider the Zamindari as the proprietors of the soil, to the property of which they succeed by right of inheritance, according to the laws of their own religion; and that the sovereign authority cannot justly exercise the power of depriving them of the succession, nor of altering it, when there are legal heirs. The privilege of disposing of the land by sale or mortgage, is derived from this fundamental right, and was exercised by the Zamindars before we acquired the Dewanny.

The origin of the properietary and hereditary rights of the Zamindars is uncertain; conjecture must supply what history does not mention; they probably existed before the Muhammedan conquest, and without any formal acknowledgment have acquired stability by prescription."

Fifth Report, II, pp. 80-81.

"Mr. Shore has most ably and, in my opinion, most successfully, in his Minutes delivered in June last, argued in favour of the right of the Zamindars to the property of the soil.

"Although, however, I am not only of opinion that the Zamindars have the best rights, but from being persuaded that nothing could be so ruinous to the public interest as that the land should be retained as the property of Government, I am also convinced that, failing the claim of right of the Zamindars, it would be necessary for the public good to grant a right of property in the soil to them, or to persons of their descriptions. I think it unnecessary to enter into any discussion of the grounds upon which their right appears to be founded."[1]

Cornwallis decided to grant proprietary right to Zamindars for without such a body there was no means of extending and improving agriculture. Large tracts of land in the possession of the Company still lay waste and it was idle to expect that they could be brought under cultivation through agents who changed from time to time. The success of the cultivators were limited and it was necessary and desirable that Zamindars should be made proprietors, if improvement of agriculture was desired.

As regards the question of assessment, Shore dealt with the matter in his Minute and said that it should be based on the actuals of recent years rather than upon minute local investigation where there was always possibility of error or fraud. He rejected Grant's view that the amount of the revenue was limited only by the productivity of the land, that the basis of calculation should be the assessment of 1765 and that local conditions should be thoroughly explored. Cornwallis accepted Shore's view.

A serious difference of opinion arose between Shore and Cornwallis as regards the third question. Shore was opposed to a Permanent Settlement for which he said the time was not yet ripe. He argued :

"That we do not possess a sufficient knowledge of the actual collections made from the several districts to enable us to distribute the assessment upon them with the requisite equality; that the demands of the Zamindars upon the taluqdars and *ryots* are undefined; and even if we did possess a competent knowledge of the above points, there are peculiar circumstances attending this

1. Forrest, Selections from the State Papers, II, pp. 73-74.

country which must ever render it bad policy in the Government to fix their demand upon the lands."[1]

He suggested a decennial settlement and added that if the Government bound itself to a permanent settlement it would be impossible to remedy the defects and errors revealed by the actual working of the settlement. He urged that the proposed limitation of settlement would not diminish the confidence of the Zamindars, or induce *the neglect and desolation of land because to people* who had subsisted on annual expedient, a period of ten years was nearly equal to perpetuity and that their own interest at the commencement of the team and their confidence in the stability and advantages of the system towards its close, would induce the necessary exertion on the part of Zamindars. In support of his contention he urged that the cultivation of Bengal had progressively increased under all the disadvantages of a variable assessment and personal charges. He suggested that the intermediate period should be employed in inspiring confidence among the Zamindars by appropriate measures and that after four or five years, during which period the Zamindars would be induced by self-interest to cultivate their land, the settlement might be declared permanent.

Lord Cornwallis met these arguments by two lengthy Minutes written on September 18, 1789 and February 10, 1790. He said that the Home Government seemed to be pre-determined to make the settlement perpetual and irrevocable and that 'in my judgment a permanent settlement alone can make the country flourish and secure happiness to the body of inhabitants'. "........And as I have a clear conviction in my own mind of the utility of the system, I should think it a duty I owe to them- to my country, and to humanity, to recommend it most earnestly to the Court of Directors to lose no time in declaring the permanency of the settlement.........and not postpone for ten years the commencement of the prosperity and solid improvement of the country."

After thus pronouncing judgment in the style of the eighteenth century Lord Cornwallis proceeded to state his reasons. He said that the rights of the Zamindars recognised by Shore himself, would be nothing but a mockery if the Government retained to itself the right to demand whatever rent it thought proper after ten years. In addition to the question of right there was the more solid argument for the improvement of land. The Governor-General added:

1. Forrest, Selections from State Papers, II, p. 87.

> "In a country where the landlord has a permanent property in the soil, it will be worth his while to encourage his tenants who hold his farm on lease to improve that property; at any rate he will make such an agreement with them as will prevent their destroying it. But when the landlord of the soil himself is the rightful owner of the land, he is only to become the farmer for a lease of ten years, and if he is then to be exposed to the demand of a new rent, which may perhaps be dictated by ignorance or rapacity, what hope can there be, I will not say of improvement but of preventing desolation? Will it not be to his interest during the early part of that term, to extract from the estate every possible advantage for himself; and if any future hopes for a permanent settlement are then held out, to exhibit his lands at the end of it in a state of ruin."[1]

As regards Shore's objection that more information was necessary before making the settlement permanent Lord Cornwallis said that it could not be hoped that more information would be available to the Government at the end of the years. Rather it might be more difficult to obtain information as a result of confession at the end of the period of settlement. "After all", said Cornwallis, "I understand the word 'permanency' to extend to the Jumma only and not to the details of the settlement." He knew well that many new regulations would have to be made to supply the details and adjust the rights of the Zamindars, taluqdars and *ryots*. The advantages of a fixe assessment were obvious:

> "There is this further advantage to be expected from a fixed assessement in a country subject to drought and inundation, that it affords a strong inducement to the land-holder to exert himself to repair as speedily as possible the damages which his lands may have sustained from these calamities; for it is to be expected that when the public demand upon his land is limited to a specific sum, he will employ every means in his power to render them capable of again paying that sum, and as large a surplus as possible for his own use. His ability to raise money to make these exertions will be proportionally increased by the additional value which the limitation of the public demand will stamp upon his landed property; the

1. Forrest, p. 74.
Fifth Report on East India Affairs, II, pp. 527-543.

reverse of this is to be expected when the public assessment is subject to unlimited increase."[1]

Lord Cornwallis dealt at length with the objections of Shore and pointed out that the argument about the ignorance of the Zamindars had little force because the evil resulted from the system of collecting revenues which prevailed in the country. They had been kept in tutelage for a long time and all initiative had been destroyed. To save the *ryot* from the exactions of the landlords the latter could be made to grant them *pattas* upon the principles suggested by Mr. Shore in his proposals for the Bengal Settlement. It will be wearisome to reiterate all the arguments put forward in support of his position but the following words reveal the intensity of the Governor-General's conviction:

> "........I am clearly of opinion that this Government will never be better qualified at any given period whatever, to make an equitable settlement of the land revenue of these provinces; and if the want of further information was to be admitted now or at any other future period as a ground for delaying the declaration of the permanency of the assessment, the commencement of the happiness of the people and of the prosperity of the country would be delayed for ever."[1]

With these arguments Lord Cornwallis decided in favour of a decennial settlement and issued a proclamation on February 10, 1790 in which he stated that though fixed for a limited term the setttlement was intended to be permanent and till it would be declared so as soon as the sanction of the Directors was obtained. Shore objected to such a notification on the ground that the Zamindars would regard it as a promise and should the Directors refuse the sanction, would charge the Government with a breach of faith. Lord Cornwallis did not agree with this view. He was supported by Dundas and Pitt who very carefully examined the pros and cons of the proposed system, and declared in favour of permanence. In 1793 their sanction reached India and the settlement in Bengal and Bihar was made permanent.

Lord Cornwallis's proclomation dated March 22, 1793 contained two articles which are important:

> II. "The Marquis Cornwallis Knight of the most noble order of the Garter, Governor-General in Council, now notifies to all Zamindars, independent taluqdars, and other actual proprietors of land, in the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, that he has been

1. Forrest, p. 105.

powered by the honorable Court of Directors for the affairs of the East India Company, declare the Jumma which has been or may be assessed before their lands under the regulations above mentioned, fixed for ever."

III. "The Governor-General in Council accordingly delares to the Zamindars, independent taluqdars, and other actual proprietors of land, with or on behalf of whom a settlement has been concluded under the regulation (21) abovementioned, that at the expiration of the term of the settlement, no alteration will be made in the assessment which they have respectively engaged to pay, but that they and their heirs and lawful successors will be allowed to hold their estates at such assessment for ever."[1]

Accordsng to Mr. R. C. Dutta the assessment made was double of that which prevailed in the beginning of the eighteenth century and the collections were as much as those made in the first year of the Dewani, i. e., 1765-66.[2]

Historians and publicists have expressed different opinions about the merits of the Permanent Settlement. Some have like the late Mr. R. C. Dutta praised it as a wise and benevolent measure which has improved agriculture and diffused prosperity among the people. There are others who regard it as a blunder which has done much harm to the State by depriving it of the unearned increment which has been exclusively enjoyed by the Zamindars. These conflicting views are not contradictory as may seem to be the case. The Permanant Settlement was obviously advantageous to the Zamindars. More lands were brought under cultivation, agriculture improved and they began to get much higher rents. The value of land increased owing to the rise in prices and this benefited the Zamindar without the State getting even a fraction of the profit. The unearned increment was appropriated by the Zamindar exclusively and the growing burden of expenditure was shifted to other shoulders and often questionable schemes of taxation were resorted to and the other provinces had to pay more taxes so that the landlords of Bengal may continue to enjoy their prosperity. Henceforward the Zamindar felt secure in his possession and was no longer subject to fines and burdens which had been the lot of the farmers under the old system. The Government escaped from the

1. Forrest, I, p. 206.
2. Economic History of India under Early British Rule, pp. 92-93.

worry, bother and expenditure of periodical assessments which led to "economic dislocation, evasion and concealment of wealth, and the deliberate throwing of land out of cultivation". As the result of the Permanent Settlement a new class of landlords came into existence which was loyal to the Government and which if proper encouragement had been afforded by the State would have materially helped in the industrialisation of the province instead of wasting money on dissipation. Still, it must be conceded that the measure diffused property and wealth among the people and imparted the Government a stability and strength which were not to be found under temporary settlements.

But it was only by gradual stages that the lot of the Zamindars improved. In the beginning they suffered much. Many of them failed to pay their dues by the date fixed and their lands, according to the strongest provisions of law, were sold by auction. Thus a defaulting Zamindar was always confronted with ruin and bankruptcy and many old and aristocratic families were deprived of their lands. As the Zamindars were not allowed to employ coercion in the collection of rents, they frequently met with evasion on the part of their tenants. It was in 1799 that they were permitted to distrain crops. In the 19th century the condition of the Zamindars improved considerably and Sir John Strachey estimated the Bengal Zamindar's profit at 40 times more than what it was in the beginning.

Many Englishmen like Shore were profit-minded but we can discover a touch of idealism in the character of Lord Cornwallis who felt for the poor people who had for decades tilled their lands under certain conditions only to feed the rapacity of the tax-farmer whose visitations they dreaded and disliked. Their lot was perhaps no better. They were sill attracted and rack-rented in the many cases and found it difficult to obtain redress in courts of law where justice was neither cheap nor expeditious. Cornwallis tried to mitigate thier distress but he was not very much successful. Their rights had to be guarded by the Bengal Tenancy Acts of 1859, 1868 and 1885. This was undoubtedly a harsh feature of the Permanent Settlement which turned farmers into proprietors of land without providing for the security and comfort of the peasantry who constituted the backbone of the population. In the opinion of Beveridge it was a gross blunder and injustice to make a settlement with the Zamindars only and to neglect the poor *ryot* whose claims were as strong and well-founded as those of the Zamindars.

The Permament Settlement has not fulfilled the expectations that were formed of it. It has not prevented famines nor has it secured the three objects at which it aimed in 1793, namely the punctual payment of the 'minimum' fixed as the State demand

the extension of cultivation and the development of agriculture. If more land has been brought under cultivation, it is not due to the Permanent Settlement but to the increase in population. The hope that the landowners would invest money for the development of agriculture has also proved illusory. The minimum State demand was fixed but its punctual payment was not ensured and the law was so defective that by its operation many families were deprived of their inherited lands.

It has been contended that if the settlement had been delayed by ten or twenty years more, knowledge might have been acquired and the mistakes and anomalies which resulted from hasty legislation might have been avoided. Sir Alfred Lyall found fault with the Permanent Settlement for cutting off the Indian treasury from all share in the increase of rents and the immense spread of cultivation but he admitted that it had undoubtedly made Bengal the wealthiest province of the empire. In his judgment from that time forward political insecurity within British territory gave way to a sense of stability and to the feeling of confidence which is the mainspring of industry.[1]

Thompson and Garrett have decried the Permanent Settlement and gone to the length of saying that hardly any one would defend it today and all Indians would denounce without measure what up to thirty years believed by most Nationalist writers as the only good thing which the English had done.[2]

A balanced statement of the defects of the Permanent Settlement is contained in the Cambridge History of India:

> "........it was soon found that the evil of 'balance' continued as before : that the efforts made to prevent the oppression of tenants and *ryots* led only to the complete blocking of the Courts of Justice : that the attempts made to realise the revenue without personal correction of the Zamindars resulted in frequent sale of estates. Moreover the provision that taluqdars could claim exemption from the Zamindars' control increased the business before the Courts, and led to the cutting up of estates."[3]

Renewal of the Charter (1793)

In 1793 the Company's Charter was renewed and as the Indian finances were in a satisfactory condition the Act was

1. Rise of the British Dominion in India, p. 220.
2. Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India, p. 1911.
3. Cambridge History of India, V, p. 456.

passed without any serious opposition. The previous Acts were generally re-affirmed; and the principles which were embodied in them were emphasised. The Company's monopoly of trade was retained for 20 years and Englishmen were allowed to trade with India only under certain special restrictions. The entry of Englishmen into India in large numbers was feared and colonisation was discouraged. Missionaries were not allowed to go to preach Christianity in India for it was feared that their activities might create trouble or disturb the public peace.

In August 1793 Lord Cornwallis who was now created a Marquis left Calcutta and in the beginning of October he started on his homeward voyage from Madras.

The Commander-in-Chief was not to be a member of the Governor-General's Council unless specially appointed by the Court of Directors. The Governor-General's powers over the other two Presidencies and his authority to override the decision of the majority of his Council were reaffirmed and similar powers were given to the Governors of Madras and Bombay. Provision was also made for the appointment of a Vice-President during the Governor-General's absence from the headquarters and the Governor-General was given full authority to act without a local council and to pass any orders without consulting it. In times of emergency he could go to any province and assume full control of the Government there as Lord Wellesley did in 1798 on the eve of the Fourth Mysore War. The Company was allowed to appoint its covenanted servants and others as Justices of the Peace in India. Patronage was curtailed and the Act laid down that "all vacancies happening in any of the offices, places, or employments in the civil line of the Company's service in India (being under the degree of Councillor) should be from time to time filled up and supplied from among the civil servants of the said Company belonging to the Preidency wherein such vacancies shall respectively happen ....No office, place or employment, the salary perquisites and emoluments whereof shall exceed £ 500 per annum shall be conferred upon or granted to any of the said servants who should not have been actually resident in India as a covenanted servant of the said Company ...." This was a healthy provision and the servants of the Company gained much by it.

The doctrine of free trade did not prevail and the exclusive policy of the Directors was fully supported by Dundas, President of the Board of Control.

Sir John Shore's appointment as Governor-General (1793-98)

As has been said before Shore had come out to India as a clerk in the service of the East India Company on a small pittance. Gradually he rose to high position and became a member of the Calcutta Council. He owed his rise, to no small extent, to Philip Francis whom he supplied with information regarding revenue matters which was the basis of his minutes. Hastings' suspicion was that Francis's minutes were written by Shore but there is no warrant for such an opinion because Philip Francis was a man of great ability who had acquired much knowledge and experience of the Indian administration. Lord Cornwallis always held the view that the Governor-General of India shall be appointed direct from the ranks of English noblemen but he was so impressed by Shore's abilities and uprightness that he was prepared to make an exception in his case. His appointment was partly due to the fact that the Home Government failed to find for the post of Governor-General what King George called 'a very proper man of distinction'. At one time Dundas himself wanted to proceed to Indin to assume the great responsibilities but he was prevented by circumstances from fulfilling his wish. Shore's ability and integrity were unquestioned but he was a timid man of limited outlook. Expert in routine business and fully conversant with details, he lacked the statesman's vision and insight. He had no eye for the large issues of politics nor was he capable of looking into the future. Essentially a bureaucrat, wedded to red-tapism and office-routine, he loved order and peace and lacked the heroic qualities that were needed to deal with the political situation that was opening before him. He adhered to the policy of Pitt's India Act somewhat slavishly and his faith in *laissez-faire* led to serious consequences. The principal event of Sir John Shore's regime was the rupture of the Company's relations with the Nizam who was their ally and whom they were pledged by treaty to support. In order to understand the history of this rupture it is necessary to review briefly the developments at the Courts of Poona and Hyderabad from the time of signing of the Treaty of Serangapatam till the battle of Kharda which destroyed for the time being at least the independence of the Nizam's Government.

Mahadji Sindhia. The treaty of Salbai was signed on May 17, 1782 and was ratified by the Nana on behalf of the Peshwa on December 20, 1782. It ensured the dominance of the British in Indian politics, and increased the power of Mahadji who now began to cherish new ambitions and designs. He wanted for himself a position, independent of the Peshwa and the Nana and upon this he concentrated all his energy and attention. He was arrested in his endeavours by de Boigne, a French soldier of for-

tune, who joined his service on a salary of Rs. 1,000 per mensem and offered to organize a force to further the plans of his master.

After the death of Afrasayab[1] in October 1784 Sindhia attained to a position of great prominence at Delhi and on 4th December was officially appointed Naib Vakil-i-Mutlaq (Deputy Viceregent or Deputy Regent Plenipotentiary as Sir Jadunath translates it) by Shah Alam II who had placed himself entirely under his protection. His rival Nana who had acquired much influence in Poona politics looked on Sindhia's veiled designs with suspicion and regarded his growing power in the north as dangerous to his own position. A plot was formed to depose Madho Rao II and Najaf Khan who was supreme in his time in the Councils of the Mughal Empire. He died on April 22, 1782 and was succeeded by his adopted son Afrasayab who became Amir-ul-Umra. He had a great rival in Muhammad Beg, Governor of Agra. Afrasayab wanted Sindhia to help him and the latter compelled the Beg to surrender the fort of Agra on March 27,1785. Muhammad Beg was pardoned and allowed to enter the imperial service. Sindhia acquired much influence at Delhi and became the most powerful man in the empire. The Emperor conferred upon him the title of Amir-ul-Umra which he refused but he accepted on the Peshwa's be half the title of Vakil-ul-Mutlaq. At Poona an intrigve was seton foot to place Raghoba's son Baji Rao on the *gaddi* but it was frustrated by the Nana who connected Sindhia with the authors of the intrigue.

As the chief authority in the Delhi empire (1788) Sindhia took steps to organize the administration. At his instance the Emperor revived his old claims and demanded tribute from the English. He found himself in sore financial straits. The revenue was not collected, the 'farmers'[2] oppressed the *ryots* to squeeze money out of them. Lawlessness prevailed and the tax collectors sometimes went to the length of torturing the people to compel them to yield up their wealth. Sardesai writes that 'they tied rags to the bodies of the rich and the poor alike and pouring oil on them set them on fire'.[3] Cultivation had declined; famine stalked the land; the treasury was exhausted; the Emperor pestered him with his demands and Sindhia had not money enough to meet his own expenses and those of the Emperor. His credit was low; no banker would advance him money; the

1. Afrasayab on the son of Najaf Khan who was Prime Minister.
2. There were farmers of revenue. Revenue was farmed out to the highest bidder and these men oppressed the people.
3. Main Currents of Maratha History, p. 178.

distress in the camp was fearful and crowds of men were seen roaming about in search of food.[1]

Sindhia held an enquiry into the titles and tenures of Jagirdars, and this gave offence to the Muslim nobility who disliked the influence of a "Hindu upstart". Muhammad Beg fanned the flame of discontent and wanted to pay off old scores. When Sindhia demanded tribute from the Rajput chiefs in the name of the Emperor they also became hostile to him and Jaipur and Jodhpur formed a coalition to resist his importunate demands. They were joined by Muhammad Beg and in the great battle that was fought at Lalsot, about 40 miles from Jaipur, Sindhia's forces were defeated. Taking advantge of his reverses Ghulam Qadir, the son of Zabita Khan, the Rohilla Chief, marched to Delhi in the beginning of 1785 and extorted from the decrepit Emperor the title of Amir-ul-Umra. He invited Ismail Beg, Muhammad Beg's nephew, who had a grudge against Sindhia to join him, and with his forces the Beg advanced upon Agra which was held by Lakwa Dada, a Maratha General of experience. Ghulam Qadir in the meantime had to go to his kingdom to defend it against the Sikhs who had started marauding expeditions towards the South East. Ismail Beg had to fight single-handed against the Marathas and was severely defeated in a battle near Fatehpur Sikri through the bravery and skill of de Boigne. Not satisfied with the progress of Sindhia's fortunes, the General left his service and settled at Lucknow as a businessman. Sindhia returned to his Cantonment at Mathura.

Ghulam Qadir and Ismail Beg marched to Delhi and overpowered the feeble resistence that was offered by the Emperor. The palace was plundered and the Rohilla chief, infuriated at the Emperor's inability to disgorge his hidden treasures, tortured the latter and blinded him with his own dagger. The Emperor was deposed and a puppet prince, a son of Ahmad Shah, was placed upon the throne. The royal family was treated with great indignity and even the imperial princesses were flogged and turned out into the streets when the Afghans failed to obtain the imaginary treasures. He smoked his *huqqa* on the peacock throne and these orgies lasted several weeks. Sindhia was moved to indignation at the news of these horrible atrocities and marched with his forces against Ghulam Qadir who was defeated and captured. As a punishment for his misdeeds his face was blackened and he was paraded round the city of Mathura on a jackass. His eyes were cut out and his limbs were hacked to

1. Such is the account of Mahadji's finances given by one of Nana's agents. It was sent to Poona by him from Sindhia's camp near Mathura about the year 1788.

pieces which were sent to Delhi to be laid before the fallen and degraded majesty of Shah Alam. Sindhia took the Emperor under his protection; the latter was touched so much by the Maratha Chief's kindness that he composed odes in his praise and addressed him as his 'farzand' (son) and the giver of light and life.

Surrounded as he was by enemies on all sides, Sindhia felt that he could not do much without de Boigne's help and therefore requested him to return. The General chivalrously responded to the call and the combined forces marched against Ismail Beg who was completely routed. His Rajput allies, the Princes of Jaipur and Jodhpur, were defeated in June 1790 and the territories of Taragarh and Merta were captured. Soon after the Rana of Udaipur also offered his submission.

De Boigne rendered a great service to Sindhia. It was he who organized his scattered forces trained them in European style and imparted to them a new discipline. European officers and artillerymen were invited by him to join the armv and it was through his efforts that it attained the strength of 68 battalions, 427 guns and 40,000 horse. It was the 'New Model Army' which he organized that gave a short shrift to the Rajputs and saved Sindhia's prestige in Northern India.

The unfortunate Shah Alam who had been restored to the throne in 1790 was induced by Sindhia to confer upon the Peshwa the title of *Vakil-i-Mutlaq* and that of his *naib* upon himself. In June 1792 he proceeded to Poona with an imperial firman by which the Emperor forbade the slaughter of cows throught Hindustan. This was a serious complication for the Nana. The astute minister advised the Peshwa to refuse the proferred honour but the latter's youthful vanity was much flattered by the prospect of imperial favour and in an open darbar in the midst of great pomp and ceremony, Sindhia with feigned humility presented to his chief the robes of honour and other precious gifts together with the insignia of the fire and the sun. Mahadji behaved with great adroitness and caution, preferred himself to be a humble Patel and a slipper-bearer of the Peshwa. He carried with him concealed in his clothes a new pair of slippers which he placed on the Peshwa's feet before a distinguished assemblage of Maratha generals and statesmen. Another darbar was held in which the Peshwa bestowed upon his deputy the robes of honour and gifts that were suited to his dignity. Days and nights were spent in festivity and scenes of unparalleled brilliance and splendour were enacted which Poona had never seen before. Thus did by histrionic display and subtle diplomacy, Mahadji Sindhia succeed in establishing his influence at the Court of Poona,.

which was only a preliminary step to his more calculated and audacious plan of ousting the Nana from the position of pre-eminence which he had secured in Maratha politics. Rightly does Sir John Malcolm observe that 'Mahadji' had made himself a sovereign by calling himself a servant."[1]

Dismayed at Sindhia's statecraft, the Nana looked about for an ally who would help him to perpetuate his power. This was found in Tukoji Holkar, who atonce made common cause with him. Fully aware of the services de Boigne had rendered to Sindhia, Tukoji admitted Drenec, another French adventurer in his service, and asked him to organize a disciplined army to counteract the designs of his great rival. On September 20, 1792 the forces of de Boigne encountered Holkar at the Lakheri pass in the Kotah State and after an obstinate battle in which the issue was for long in doubt, the redoubtable General succeeded in defeating Drenec, and capturing 38 guns. The Holkar's army took to flight and during the retreat ravaged Sindhia's capital, Ujjain.

The Nana's hope that Sindhia would leave Poona to deal with Tukoji had proved false. He was greatly perturbed to hear of de Boigne's victory over Holkar's forces which rendered him powerless for the moment. Sindhia began to interest himself in the administration of the Poona State and henceforward he and the Nana both became aspirants for ascendency in Maratha politics. Each tried to elbow out the other and each became anxious to acquire mastery over the Peshwa. The Nana in desperation appealed to the latter, recounted his services, complained of Sindhia's conduct and his intrusion into Poona affairs. He offered to resign and betake himself to the life of an ascetic unless his master reposed full confidence in him. The inexperienced Peshwa burst into tears, begged forgiveness of the minister and promised to regard him as his greatest friend and councillor. Sindhia atonce took steps to checkmate this move but suddenly he was attacked by fever and after a brief illness died on February 12, 1794 in his camp at wanodi, five miles from Poona. The story of Sindhia's murder through the Nana's intrigue is a pure myth and does not rest upon reliable evidence.

Mahadji was a man of great sense and sagacity who had a clear perception of the political issues that confronted him during his life. He was never swayed by emotion. Even in the midst

1. Memoir of Central India, I, p. 125.

For an account of de Boigne the reader may consult Keene's "Hindustan under Free Lances (1770-1820)" and the Memoirs of Sir John Malcolm.

of the greatest crisis he never lost the equanimity of his temper and laughed and joked as if nothing untoward had happened. Defeat did not break his spirit nor did the pertinacity and malevolence of his foes make him swerve from the path which he had chosen for himself. He was a born military leader and had shown his great qualities in the battles he had fought. He had a rare organizing capacity and enjoyed in a large measure the confidence and devotion of his officers and men. Even foreigners served him loyally and faithfully and were much impressed by the clearness of his intellect and the straightforwardness of his character, which are revealed in the Memoirs of Count de Boigne written by his son.

Sindhia was greatly impressed by western methods of warfare. He knew the danger from the English and therefore trained his troops in European style. The guerilla tactics were abandoned and a fine modern army was created which has been regarded by some as a handicap rather than an advantage. With this army de Boigne defeated the Muslims and Rajputs and the auxiliaries of Holkar in 1792, and established his master's ascendancy in Northern India. But European writers have expressed the view that this army was ineffective when it was employed against their countrymen. Sir Alfred Lyall writes :

"Moreover in proportion as the Marathas adopted the armament and tactics of European warfare, they lost the advantage that comes out of unanimity of national, religious, or tribal sentiment, out of the bond of a common country or tradition. The new system required professional soldiers, who must be enlisted wherever they could be found and especially it needed foreign officers. In this manner the foreign or alien element grew rapidly, until the later Maratha armies became principally a miscellaneous collection of mercenaries, enlisted from all parts of India, with trained infantry and artillery commanded by adventurers of different races and countires.[1] Thompson and Garrett also endorse the above view :

> "It is noteworthy that when war broke out afresh against the English, it was not Sindhia's highly trained troops that did most damage, but the still largely "vernacularised" forces of Holkar, his rival'."[2]

1. Rise of British Dominion in India, p. 226.
2. Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India, p. 180.

CHAPTER XII

The Supremacy of the British Power
Lord Wellesley (1798—1805)

Political Condition of India on the eve of Wellesley's arrival

The political condition of India on the eve of Wellesley's arrival was quite different from that which confronted Lord Cornwallis in 1784. Tipu then was still the 'Tiger of Mysore' and a nightmare of the Madras Council. The attitude of the Nizam was uncertain. The Maratha confederacy was a power to be dreaded, having some elements of cohesion and unity with Mahadji Sindhia dominant in Northern India and Nana Fadnis powerful at the Court of Poona. In 1798 when Wellesley landed, the picture had entirely changed. The Mysore war of Cornwallis had clipped the claws of the 'Mysore Tiger'. Tipu had become powerless either to defend himself or to offend the Company. The Nizam was inclining more and more towards the English. The Maratha confederacy had brokn up into rival States, jealous of each other. The great but selfish Mahadji Sindhia had departed from the field of his glory, and no more was Nana Fadnis powerful at the Court of Poona. Such were the circumstances which favoured Wellesley in his expansionist schemes.

The Indian powers had become fully alive to the danger which threatened them from the side of the English. They had realised that they were equally dangerous as allies or foes, and that no reliance could be placed on their treaty obligations. They had also realised that their own military technique was defective, to remedy which everyone of them had engaged European officers to train their men. Most of these Europeans were Frenchmen, a fact which increased the suspicions of the English, as the two nations were at war in Europe. De Boigne at the Court of Sindhia and Raymond at the Court of the Nizam are names famous in Indian history. Wellesley came determined to put an end to this state of affairs, to establish contact with the Indian powers and reduce them to a state of subordination.

Wellesley and the Nizam

The Nizam, threatened by the Marathas from the west and Mysore from the south, had always looked to the English for

support. Before them, it was the French who kept him on the throne but after Bussy's recall, it was the English bayonets that frightened away his enemies. His position internally was also precarious as the mojority of his subjects were Hindus. In the days of Cornwallis he had entered into a defensive and offensive alliance with the English and shared in the spoils of the Third Mysore War. But he soon fell upon evil days and found himslf in serious difficulties. The Marathas under Nana Fadnis renewed their outstanding demands against the Nizam. The latter, confident of English support and placing reliance upon his own forces trained under Raymond, refused. The Nana, acting under the impression that the English dared not go to war against the Marathas, collected all the confederates under the Peshwa and declared war. The Nizam appealed to the English for support, reminded them of the treaty of 1790 but in vain. Sir John Shore, the Governor-General, had no desire to go to war with the Marathas and he wriggled out of the treaty obligations with many excuses. The Nizam was defeated at Kharda (1795) and compelled to sign a humiliating treaty. The attitude of the English deeply offended the Nizam. He dismissed the English troops and began more and more to lean towards his French Generals. Such a situation was full of peril as the English were engaged in the French Revolutionary wars.

Wellesley came with the determination to win over the Nizam once again to the side of the English. He had already heard from one David Baird at the Cape of Good Hope of the intentions of Tipu Sultan. Baird was one of the prisoners of war of Tipu released after the Treaty of Bangalore. Tipu's preparations made the settlement of the relations between the English and Nizam imperative as there was a pro-Tipu and a pro-French party at the Court. The English cause was supported by Mir Alam, a minister at Court and the Nizam was once again won over to the side of the English. In September 1798 treaty was signed. It was the first of the subsidiary alliance of Wellesley and, therefore, its terms are important:

(1) The subsidiary force at the Court of Hyderabad was made permanent and raised to six battalions costing over Rs. 24 lakhs a year to be borne by the Nizam.

(2) The Nizam's French troops were to be disbanded.

(3) The British would settle the dispute between him and the Marathas in case the Marathas did not agree; the British were to protect the Nizam 'from any unjust and unreasonable demands' of the Peshwa.

The Nizam helped the English in their war against Tipu and got his share, to be presently dealt with. The removal of Tipu

from the political field encouraged Wellesley to complete the subordination of the Nizam who was cajoled into making another treaty in October, 1800, the terms of which reduced the Nizam from a position of equality to subordination. By this treaty the subsidiary force was increased and for its payment the Nizam ceded all the territories he had got as a result of the Mysore wars. The services which the subsidiary force was to render were regulated by the terms of the treaty. The Nizam was forbidden from entering into any political negotiations with foreign powers; all his disputes were to be referred to the English who were to act as arbitrators. In return the English guaranteed the internal sovereignty of the Nizam.

The treaty secured the Nizam against internal revolution and external invasion. To the British the submission of the Nizam was a masterful stroke. It prevented a coalition of the Nizam and the Marathas, placed a large army in the very heart of the Nizam's territories at his expense, which could at any moment be used to coerce the Nizam as well as against the Marathas. The administration of the Nizam's territories did not improve and the treaty led to difficulties. The Nizam protected by English bayonets became careless; the administration became lax and disorder increased.

The Fourth Mysore War (1799)

Wellesley had come out with the firm determination of weeding out French influence from Indian Courts. The Anglo-French War in Europe and the fear of Napolean's invasion of the East made this absolutely essential and it was this determination which led to the Mysore war and the final destruction of Tipu.

Cornwallis's war with Mysore and his annexation had left Tipu powerless. But he was not the man to take defeat lying down. With astonishing rapidity he repaired the ravages of the late war, increased his resources both military and financial, improved his artillery and fortifications and sent embassies to Kabul, Persia, Arbia and Mauritius for support. He was conscious of English strength and hence desired allies who would help him in expelling the English. The French Governor of Mauritius gave encouragement to the desire of Tipu for an alliance and certain French volunteers joined Tipu's army. Tipu became a member of French Republic and planted the tree of liberty on the walls of his fortress. He called himself "citizen Tipu". Wellesley interpreted all this as an act of hostility against the English in India and he immediately made preparations for war. In this he was supported by the authorities at home. As a general principle wrote Henry Dundas, then President of the

Board of Commissioners for Indian Affairs, 'I have no hesitation in stating that we are entitled under the circumstances of the present times to consider the admission of any French force into Tipu's army as direct hostility to us.' The Secret Committee informed Wellesley that if Tipu's designs were really hostile, he should not wait but carry the war at once into the enemy's territories. Simultaneously reinforcements were sent from England. The Nizam and the Marathas joined in the attack and war was declared in February 1799. Wellesley himself was at Madras directing the operations which were under the command of General Harris and Arthur Wellesley, brother of the Governor-General. Tipu was attacked from the East and the West. At the same time efforts were made to win over his subjects and tributaries. On the 6th March, 1799, Tipu was defeated at Sedaseer by General Stuart marching from the west while on the 27th he was again defeated by General Harris at Malavali. He retired to his capital Srirangapatam which was besieged by the enemy and died fighting in its defence. With Tipu's death the Muslim power in Mysore came to an end.

The dominions of Tipu were partitioned between the allies. The British got Kanara on the west, Wynasad on the south-west, the districts of Coimbatore and Daraporam, two on the east, together with the town and island of Srirangapatam. The Nizam got the district of Gooty, Guramkonda and a part of Chitaldrug without the fort. The Peshwa was offered the districts of Hirpanhali and Soonda lying between the possessions of the British and the lands ceded to the Nizam. But, as it was expected, he refused and the lands were divided between the Nizam and the English. The remainder of the kingdom of Mysore was restored to the old Hindu dynasty in the person of a minor prince on condition that the whole of the military force maintained for the defence of the country should be English for which the Raja was to pay seven lakhs of pagodas annually, that in case of war the English might exact any larger sum and lastly in case of mismanagement the English had the right to intervene and even take over the administration. The Raja was forbidden to admit any Europeans in his service or to enter into any correspondence with foreign States. The minor prince was put in charge of Purniya, at one time finance minister of Haider Ali, now a creature of the English, through whom the whole administration was to be controlled.

By this settlement Wellesley brought the whole of Mysore under the British, keeping the Rajah as a screen to hide the extent of his aggrandisement. He himself wrote that 'under this arrangement, I trust that I shall be enabled to command the whole resources of the Raja's territory'. To have completely

annexed Mysore, which he could have done, would have entailed a greater share to the Nizam which would have made him more powerful than was desirable. The offer to the Peshwa was conditioned by his agreeing to enter into an engagement against the French, not to employ Europeans and guarantee the integrity of the new State of Mysore. As was expected the Peshwa refused to give any guarantee. The share which went to the Nizam was taken from him subsequently in 1809, as we have seen, with the result that it was the English who got everything. The Governor-General was made Marquis Wellesley and General Harris was elevated to the baronage.

Lord Mornington on the *Casus Belli* against Tipu.

The first consideration required an alternative examination of the proclamation issued at the Isle of France, together with all the collateral circumstances accompanying this extraordinary publication. The proclamation made its first appearance in Calcutta in a newspaper of the 8th of June.

At first the Governor-General doubted the authenticity of the proclamation and it seemed incredible to him that if the French really entertained a design of furnishing aid to Tippu they would publicly declare that design, when no other apparent end could be answered by such a declaration, excepting that of exposing the project in its infancy to the observations of both governments in England and India and of preparing them for stout resistance. A copy of the Proclamation was sent by the Governor-General to the Governor of Fort St. George at Madras asking him to make a remonstrance to Tipu of the Proclamation was authentic. He asked him to collect a force upon the coast, if necessary.

The first regular authentication of the proclamation which the Governor-General received was contained in the letter of Lord Macartney, of the 28th March and in that from Sir Hugh Christian of the same date received on the 18th June. Tipu despatched two ambassadors to the Isle of France and the Proclamation was published after their arrival. Tipu's ambassadors were received publicly with every mark of distinction and were entertained during their stay on the island at the public expense. On the second day the Proclamation was published and fixed up on the most public places and circulated through the town. Tipu's ambassadors allowed the Proclamation to be published at their own house. These events led to the impression in the island that Tipu would immediately attack British possessions in India. The ambassadors were present in the island when the French Government proceeded to act according to the Proclamation and assisted the execution of it by making promises in the name of Tipu

for the purpose of inducing recruits to list. They proposed to levy men to any practicable extent, stating their powers to be unlimited. They assisted in the levy of 150 officers and for the service of Tipu under the terms of the Proclamation. Few of the officers were men of ability and experience and the recruits were men of the lowest society. With such troops the ambassadors entered into several engagements in the name of Tipu Sultan. According to the Governor-General the Proclamation furnished the most powerful internal evidence of the concurrence of ambassadors on all its essential points. The pinicipal facts there were :

That Tipu Sultan had addressed letters to the General Assembly of the Isle of France to all the Generals employed there, and to the Directors of France and made the following proposals :

1. That he desired to form an alliance, offensive and defensive with the French, and offered to maintain at his expense, during the continuation of the war in India, whatever troops should be furnished by the French and to supply only the necessary aid for carrying on the war.

2. That he had given assurance that all his preparations were already completed and that the Generals and officers would find everything necessary for carrying on a species of war, to which Europeans have not been accustomed in the contests with the native powers in India.

3. That he waited only for the success of France to declare war against the English and that it was his ardent desire to expel the English from India.

The Proclamation recommended a general levy for the service of Tipu and it assured all citizens who would enlist that they would be paid liberal allowances.

Referring to the conduct of the ambassadors the Governor-General writes that the following conclusions appeared to him to be incontrovertibly established:

(1) That the ambassadors proposed to the Court of the Isle of France an offensive and defensive alliance against the British. This alliance was formally notified by a public Proclamation.

(2) That the ambassadors carried letters for the Directory containing the same propositions.

(3) That the ambassadors gave the assurance in the name of Tipu that he had actually completed the necessary preparations for war, for the express purpose of expelling the British nation from India.

(4) That the ambassadors demanded unlimited military help from the French and carried a military force in the Isle of France with the object of commencing war with the British.

(5) That this force had landed in Tipu's country and probably admitted into his service.

(6) That Tipu had personally ratified the engagements made on his behalf and has proceeded to act upon them.

(7) That although the help received from the French was much, yet the declaration of the ambassadors that it was Tipu's intention to commence a war of aggression upon the Company in India.[1]

The Governor-General's view was that having acted with offensive and defensive engagements with the enemy having proceeded to collect a force Tipu openly intended to act against the Company. He held that he had violated the treaties of peace and friendship subsisting between him and the Company and has committed an act of direct hostility against the British Government in India.

The Governor-General proceeded to discuss whether the Company gave any provocation to Tipu : He writes:

"Save the conclusion of the Treaty of Srirangapatam, the British Governments in India have uniformly conducted themselves towards Tipu Sultan, not only with the most exact attention to the principles of moderation, justice and good faith; but have endeavoured by every practicable success to conciliate his confidence and to mitigate his vindictive spirit. Some differences have accordingly arisen with respect to the boundaries of his territory bordering upon the confines of our possessions on the coast of Malabar; but the records of all the British Governments in India will show that they always manifested the utmost anxiety to provide the amicable adjustment of every doubtful and disputed point; that Tipu Sultan has received the most unequivocal proofs of the constant disposition of the Company to acknowledge and confirm all his just rights, and to remove every cause of jealousy which might tend to disrupt the continuance of peace."

"It has always been well understood that Tipu Sultan's resentment was not to be appeased by any conciliatory advance on our point of view by any other means than the recovery of his lost power, the disgrace of the British arms, and the ruin of the British interests in India. With such views it was expected that he would eagerly embrace the first favourable occasion

1. Owen's Selection from Wellesley's Despatches, p. 18.

of striking a blow against our possessions, and his intrigues at the courts of Hyderabad and Pimal together with his embassy to Zamanshah (although merged with such a degree of caution as to avoid the appearances of direct acts of aggression) were sufficient indication of a hostile mind."

The Governor-General pointed out the danger to the security of the Company's territories and the acts of hostilities on the part of Tipu Sultan. His professions and principles were a mere feint. In his judgement it was highly probable that he was instigated by the promises and exhorlations of the Government of France but as the basis of a permanent French faction in India on which the activity of the enemy may establish an army of the most formidable kind, either in peace or in war. The French had considerable influence at the Court of the Nizam, they will instigate the Marathas to make a junction with Tipu Sultan. Tipu had sent his emissaries to Zamanshah asking him to invade India. Sindhia was likely to join this coalition against the British. He sent also a letter to the Sultan of Turkey in which he said he was champion of Islam in India.

The Governor-General proposed that the British and their allies the Nizam, the Peshwa and others might make a joint declaration that their relations with Tipu should be clearly defined. He further added:

> "The revival of our alliance, the appearance of our armies in the field, and the presence of a part of the British squadron on the coast of Malabar, will probably incline Tipu to listen to the requisitions of this nature. He will soon perceive that we possess ample means of annihilating his military force and I trust he will also be convinced that we have no object in view beyond our own security and that we are really desirous of maintaining the relations of amity and peace with him."

Settlement of Tipu's territories

Lord Wellesley wrote in his letter to the Directors under date the 3rd August, 1799:

> "it appeared to me, that no principle could more justly be assumed, than that the original objects of the war should constitute the basis of the peace, and of the general settlement of our territorial acquisitions. These objects had been repeatedly declared by the allies to be a reasonable indemnification of our expense in the war, and an adequate security against the return of danger, which originally provoked us to arms."

'With a view", he continues, "to each of these just and

necessary objects it was requisite that the Company, and the Nizam, should retain a large portion of the conquered territory; but it required much consideration to determine the precise extent of that portion, as well as the just rule of partition. The war had been undertaken in the pursuit of schemes of conquest, extension of territory, or augmentation of revenue. In proportion to the magnitude and lustre of our success, it became a more urgent duty to remember, that a peace, founded in the gratification of any ambitious or inordinate view, could neither be advantageous, honourable, nor secure."

"The approved policy, interests and honour, of the British Nation, required that the settlement of the extensive Kingdom subjected to our disposal, should be formed on principles acceptable to the inhabitants of the conquered territories; just and conciliatory towards the contiguous native States; and indulgent to every party, in any degree affected by the consequences of our success."

"To have divided the whole territory equally between the Company and the Nizam, to the exclusion of any other State, would have afforded strong grounds of jealousy to the Marathas, and aggrandized Nizam's ally's power beyond all bounds of discretion. Under whatever form such a partition could have been made, it must have placed in the hands of the Nizam many of the strong fortresses on the northern frontiers of Mysore, and exposed our frontier, in that quarter, to every predatory incursion. Such a partition would have laid the foundation of perpetual differences, not only between Marathas and the Nizam, but between the Company and both those powers."

"To have divided the country into three equal portions; allowing the Marathas (who had borne no part in the expense or hazard of the war) an equal share with the other two branches of the triple alliance, in the advantages of the peace, would have been unjust towards the Nizam, and towards the Company, impolitic, as furnishing an evil example to our other allies in India; and dangerous, as effecting a considerable aggrandizement of the Maratha Empire, at the expense of the Company and the Nizam. This mode of partition also must have placed Chittledroog, and some of the most important northern fortresses, in the hands of the

Marathas; while the remainder of the fortresses, in the same line, would have been occupied by the Nizam; and our unfortified and open frontier in Mysore would have been exposed to the excesses of the undisciplined troops of both powers."

"The Marathas, unquestionably, had no claim to any portion of the conquered territory; and any considerable extension of their empire was objectionable, especially when accompanied by the possession of strong fortresses bordering on the line of our frontier. It was, however, desirable to conciliate their goodwill, and to offer to them such a portion of territory as might give them an interest in the new settlement, without offence or injury to the Nizam, and without danger to the frontier of the Company's possessions. On the other hand, it was prudent to limit the territory retained in the hands of the Company and of the Nizam within such bounds of moderation as should bear a due proportion to their respective expenses in the contest, and to the necessary means of securing the future safety of their respective dominions."

The Governor-General was of the opinion that an equal distribution of the territories between the three parties, the English, the Nizam and the Marathas would not be a just and fair settlement for the Marathas had no claim to any portion of the conquered territories and any considerable extension of their empire was objectionable especially when accompanied by the cession of fortress on the line of the British frontier. It was therefore decided to conciliate their goodwill and offer to them such a portion of territory as might give them an interest in the new settlement without offence or injury to the Nizam and without danger to the frontier of the Company's possession.

The settlement was as follows :

1. The district of Canara, including all the sea-coast of Mysore and the Provinces immediately contiguous to the possessions of the Company on the coast of Malabar, and the Carnatic were assigned to the English, to which were added the forts and the head of the passes into Mysore, and the fortress island of Srirangapatam which was deemed essential to secure the possession of the Company on the coast of Coromandel and that of Malabar.

2. The districts of Goorum Kondah, Gooty and others contiguous to his dominions were given to the Nizam and though he

had no claim to a share in the advantages of the settlement excepting in proportion to the expenses and exertions during the war.

3. As regards the share of the Marathas Lord Wellesley decided that it should be an amount which did not exceed in value two-thirds or was below one-half of the portion allotted to the Company and the Nizam and this share included Soondah, Anagondi and other districts contiguous to the Peshwa's possessions. As the Government of Poona had taken no share in the war Lord Wellesley decided that the assignment of territory should form the basis of a new treaty with them.[1]

In whose hands was the new Government of Mysore to be placed ? No party had a positive right or title to the throne and the Governor-General judged it expedient that the choice should be made between the family of Tipu Sultan and the ancient Hindu family of Mysore.

The Governor-General atonce ruled out Tipu's family for an heir of Tipu Sultan will be disloyal and will try to subvert the settlement. With such a price no true alliance could be made and there was nothing to prevent him from cherishing an irreconcilable hatred towards the English. On the other hand, the lineal descendant of the old Hindu royal family, oppressed and degraded by Tipu will have every reason to be grateful to the British. He will have no friendly dealings with the French and his installation will lead to the stability of the new settlement in all its parts. This young Prince was Krishna Raj Wodiyar. The Governor-General added :

> "In the place of that power would be substituted one whose interests and resources might be absolutely identified with our own, and the kingdom of Mysore, so long the source of calamity and alarm to the Carnatic might become a new barrier of our defence, and might supply fresh means of wealth and strength to the Company, their subjects and allies.
>
> "In the additions to these motives of policy, moral consideration and sentiments of generosity and humanity, favoured the restoration of the ancient family of Mysore. Their high birth, the antiquity of their legitimate title and their long and unmerited sufferings, rendered them popular objects of compassion and respect; nor could it

1. The Peshwa's share included Harponelly, the district of Chittaldurg, part of Bednore above the Ghats and other districts—Despatches, p. 137.

be doubted that their government would be both non-acceptable and more indulgent than that of the Muhammedan usurpers, to the mass of the inhabitants of the country, composed almost entirely of Hindus."

A Commission was appointed to carry out the settlement. It acted under the orders of the Governor-General. Their first act was to make provision for the principal surviving officers and chiefs of the late Sultan and for the families of those who were slain in the war. This measure produced a good effect on the chief Muslim families in Mysore and placed the clemency and generosity of the British Government in the most conspicuous and honourable light. Mir Qamaruddin was sent to Gurrumconda where he was to settle with a Jagir from the Nizam. The Brahman Poorniah, the Chief Financier of the late Sultan, was appointed Dewan of the young Raja of Mysore. The families of Tipu and his sons were sent to reside in the fort of Vellore.

A new treaty was made with the Raja.

The Governor-General wrote to the Directors :

"But the success of your arms in the short period of the late campaign has not merely excluded the French from Mysore, provided an ample indemnity to you and your ally for the charges of the war, destroyed the hostile power of Tipu Sultan and effectually precluded its revival, but has transferred the sword of your implacable enemy into your own hands and turned to your use the main springs of his wealth and strength."

Character of Tipu

The fear with which the English regarded Tipu is the measure of his greatness. They dreaded him and hated him. That hate has found expression in the character which English histories have painted of Tipu. He has been described by Kirkpatrick as "the cruel and relentless enemy .... the oppressive and unjust ruler and what not". "Haider", writes Colonel Willks "was seldom wrong and Tipu seldom right...... unlimited persecution united in detestation of his rule every Hindu in his dominions. He was barbarous where severity was vice and indulgent where it was virtue. If he had qualities fitted for Empire they were strangely equivocal", the disqualifications were obvious and unquestionable, and the decision of history will not be far removed from the observation almost proverbial in Mysore 'that Haider was born to create an Empire, Tipu to lose one'. Others less partial have however left a favourable impression of his character and administration. 'His country,' wrote Major Dirom, 'was

found everywhere full of inhabitants, and apparently cultivated to the utmost extent of which the soil was capable; while the discipline and fidelity of his troops in the field, until their last overthrow, were testimonies equally strong of the excellent regulations which existed in his army. His Government though strict and arbitrary, was despotism of a polite and able sovereign.' Another military officer Lt. Moore has remarked 'when a person travelling through a strange country, finds it well cultivated, populous with industrious, cities newly founded, commerce extending, towns increasing, and everything flourishing so as to indicate happiness, he will take it to be under a form of government congenial to the minds of the people. This is a picture of Tipu's country, and this is our conclusion respecting its Government.' Tipu therefore was not the barbarous and cruel fanatic as depicted by his enemies. He was an industrious ruler, holding the strings of administration in his hands and giving detailed instructions to his officers. "As a domestic ruler," wrote Mill, he sustains an advantageous comparison with the greatest princes of the East." He was not cruel by nature. His cruelties had a policy behind them. He was cruel to his enemies, in order to set an example to others. A devout Muslim by religion, he gave grants to Hindu temples and employed the Hindus in responsible offices of the state. Nothing could reconcile him to the English against whom he fought throughout and eventually lost his life and kingdom. He showed a lack of judgment in throwing his lot with the French from the Isle of France could never be of any use to him. How far he actually relied upon their support, how far his negotiation were merely designed to keep the English on the right side, is difficult to determine. But it is impossible to believe that he failed to discern that France could not be of much use to him on the fields of Mysore. Anyway his French leanings were made the cause of war and he died a martyr fighting for the independence of his country.

The conquest of Mysore and the treaties with the Nizam completely changed the balance of power. Tipu's death removed an inveterate foe of the British, while the annexations gave them complete command over the sea-coast of the peninsula diminishing the little danger that existed of French intrigue. The only power that remained was that of the Marathas. Before we turn to them and the war, Wellesley's dealings with the little princelings of the Carnatic, Tanjore and Oudh may be conveniently disposed of.

Carnatic

Among the papers of Srirangapatam, Tipu's capital, were discovered certain documents which went to show that the Nawab

of the Carnatic was in secret correspondence with Tipu against the British. These papers were used by Wellesley as ample justification for interfering in the affairs of the Carnatic. Those were far from satisfactory. The subsidy was in arrears, the Nawab was heavily in debt to English gentlemen and the administration in a state of chaos. Wellesley mended all this by ending the Nawab's rule. He declared that the Nawab had broken the treaty and had forfeited his throne. Happily for the Nawab, death saved him from the indignity that Wellesley had planned for him. The Nawab Omdut-ul-Umrah died in July 1801. His son Ali Husain succeeded him. Wellesley pressed him to surrender the civil and military administration of the Carnatic to the British. Ali Husain refused demanding proof of the faithlessness which his father was charged. Finding that difficult Wellesley negotiated with Azim-ud-dowlah, the nephew of the late Nawab, and in return for the title and a pension secured from him an agreement by which the civil and military government of the Carnatic passed into British hands. The arrangement, while beneficial to the English, was neither honest nor legal. Azim-ud-dowlah had no right to give away what did not belong to him. The faithlessness with which the English charged the late Nawab and used it as a pretext against his son could not be established. It is no longer a matter of controversy that the papers found at Srirangapatam did not prove any treachery on the part of the Nawab of the Carnatic. Torrensan, admirer of Wellesley, has been constrained to remark that 'no proof of political perfidy seems to have been gleamed from the mass of rubbish found at Srirangapatam'. The fact is that with the removal of Tipu, the policy of keeping the Carnatic as a buffer between Madras and Mysore was no longer necessary. The administration of the Nawab which for long had become a sham could now be scrapped, and the letters were used as a pretext. Nothing could have prevented Wellesley from openly taking over the administration. What is not understandable are the attempts at justifying the measure—attempts which are both inconsistent and unsound. In the same way the rulers of Tanjore and Surat were deprived of their administrations in return for titles and pensions. That the proceedings were characterised by highhandedness and injustice neither troubled Wellesley nor the authorities in England As long as the British power increased everything was just. That was the principle on which Wellesley acted throughout.

Relations with Oudh

A wolf will always find a pretext for devouring the lamb. In the case of Oudh mal-administration was the pretext for Wellesley's interference. We have already seen the relations of the Company with the State of Oudh till the time of Cornwallis.

Asaf-ud-dowlah died in 1797. The succession was disputed between Wazir Ali also called Mirza Ali whom the late Nawab had regarded as his son and successor and Saadat Ali the late Nawab's eldest brother who lived on a pension at Banares. Sir John Shore, the Governor-General, saw his chance of using the dispute as a means of advancing the interests of the English. In fact it was the British habit of recognising and supporting that candidate who promised the most that invariably created trouble. Shore recognised Saadat Ali who was raised to the throne by him in January 1798. His tribute was raised to Rs. 76 lakhs and the fort of Allahabad was handed over to the Company. The treaty also provided that the Nawab would not communicate with any foreign power or admit Europeans without the Company's permission. Finally the Nawab agreed to pay twelve lakhs of rupees to the English for raising him to the Masnad. In the terms of the treaty we find the reason why Saadat Ali was made Nawab.

Wellesley's attention was attracted early towards Oudh. His policy was guided by strategic and financial considerations. He aimed at encircling the Nawab-Wazir with British dominions so that he could not contact either the Afghans or the Marathas. at making the subsidiary force independent of the Wazir by annexing territory, and lastly at reducing the Nawab's military strength by disturbing his troops. As he could not charge the Nawab with treachery, he used mal-administration and the rumour of Zaman Shah's invasion as a pretext for carrying out his policy. Zaman was the ruler of Afghanistan who was credited with the intention of invading India. The Nawab resisted but in vain. Wellesley ordered troops from Cawnpore and Allahabad to march upon Lucknow. The Nawab was powerless to resist; he gave way and a treaty was forced upon him in November 1801 by which he was compelled to cede half of his dominions comprising Rohilkhand and the Lower Doab, that is the land lying between the Ganges and the Jumna. The number of British troops was increased, while those of the Nawab were reduced and lastly he agreed to improve the administration and abide by the advice of the British Resident. That the arrangement was highly beneficial to the Company is undoubted. It isolated the Nawab, reduced the military power, increased British territory and resources. That it was highhanded and unjust is equally undoubted. The claims of justice had always sat lightly on the English Governor-General. Having secured his object Wellesley left the administration in the state in which he found it, satisfied by the assurance of the Nawab to improve it. The dealings with Oudh were severely criticised by the Court of Directors but the Board of Control restrained them from demanding Wellesley's withdrawal.

Lord Wellesley before taking action made out a strong case against the Nawab. In his letter dated 9th February, 1800 he wrote :

"Your Excellency, since my arrival in India, has repeatedly complained of the ruinous condition of your internal governments, and earnestly solicited my direct interference, as being indisputably necessary for the purpose of effecting a complete reform in your affairs, and especially in your military establishments.

"You have recently declared to Lieutenant-Colonel Scott, that this same plan for the reform of your military establishment never, in any measure, met with your approbation or acceptance, or was deemed expedient by you'.

"I became satisfied that it was absolutely necessary to commence with that reform of your Excellency's military forces, which your Excellency had declared to be indispensable. I was originally led to this conclusion by a review of the correspondence and negotiations which had passed between your Excellency and Mr. Lumsden in consequence of the advance of Zeman Shah to Lahore, towards the end of 1798; and I was further confirmed in my opinion by a retrospect of the events which had followed the rebellion and flight of Vizier Ali.

"Your Excellency when consulted by Sir James Craig and Mr. Lumsden on the measures of defence to be adopted against the threatened invasion of Zeman Shah, declared that 'no confidence was to be placed in your troops' and you not only avowed your military force to be inadequate to contribute any assistance towards the defence of your dominions, but required the presence of part of the British army within your capital for the express purpose of protecting person and authority against the excesses of your own disaffected and disorderly troops, in the same moment when the services of the whole of the British army were most urgently demanded upon your Excellency's frontier to resist the approach of Zeman Shah. Hitherto, however, the fidelity and utility of your Excellency's troops had been distrusted principally on grounds suggested by their repeated contumacy and disobedience. That they were actually capable of betraying the interests of your Excellency in a crisis of positive danger, was subsequently proved beyond a possibility of doubt by their treacherous conduct during the commotions excited by Vizier Ali."

The Nawab himself admitted in his letters the need for reform and when the Governor-General's plan was laid before him and approved and then he did not hesitate to assert that the plan had never in any measure, met with his approbation or

acceptance or been deemed expedient by him. The Governor-General asserted the Company's right to augment their forces within the Nawab's dominions to whatever extent they were necessary for the permanent security of their common interests. He reminded the Nawab that he was bound by 7th Article on the Treaty concluded between him and Sir John Shore to defray the expense of any force which the British Government considered necessary for the effectual protection of his dominions. The right of the British Government to make such an augmentation even against the Nawab's consent in the event of an invasion of his dominions or of any sudden alarm of domestic or foreign war, had never been disputed by him.

The Nawab offered to abdicate and when he was asked not to do so he changed his mind. The Governor-General was convinced that he never had any intention to do so. He really felt that the Nawab's motive was to delay the reform of the military establishment.

The Nawab was charged with impeding the progress of British troops, by exposing them to difficulties in obtaning supplies of provisions and with refusing the necessary purvanas to your amils. The Governor-General regarded this as a serious matter and wrote to the Nawab :

"The conduct of your Excellency in both instances stated, but more flagrantly in the last, is of a nature so unequivocably hostile, and may prove so injurious to every interest, both of your Excellency and of the Company, that your perseverance in so dangerous a course, will leave no other alternative than that of considering all amicable engagements between the Company and your Excellency to be dissolved, and of regulating my subsequent proceedings accordingly. I am, however, always inclined to hope that your Excellency may have been inadvertently betrayed into these imprudent and unjustifiable measures by the insidious suggestions of evil councillors, and being ever averse to construe your Excellency's actions in such a manner as must compel me to regard and to treat you as a prince no longer connected with the Company, by the ties of amity and of a common interest; I trust that my next accounts from Lieutenant-Colonel Scott, may enable me to view your Excellency's conduct in a more favourable light, but lest my wishes in this respect should be disappointed, it is my duty to warn your Excellency in the most unreserved terms, that your Excellency alone will be responsible for all the evils which cannot fail to result from any further perseverence in the fatal and imprudent course of measures which you have recently pursued. I also think it necessary not to delay for a moment whatever further steps may be pointed out to you by Lieutenant-Colonel Scott, as necessary

to effect the two urgent and indispensable objects: namely, the reform of your military establishment, and the provision of funds for the regular monthly payment of all the Company's troops in Oude.

"........but circumstances well known to you, have hitherto prevented us from executing all dictates of my duty with respect to that distressed country, and have compelled me to limit my efforts to a partial reform of his Excellency's military establishments; providing for the security of his Excellency's dominions and government to the extent of furnishing an efficient and respectable force for their defence and support, and of commencing a proportionate reduction in his Excellency's military establishments.

"It was always evident that these precautions must prove fruitless if the defects in the civil administration of Oude should be suffered progressively to impair the fundamental resources of the State. The continuance of the present system for a long period of time will not only render his Excellency unable to discharge the subsidy on account of the additional troops, but will exhaust the resources of the country to such a degree as to preclude the possibility of realizing the former subsidy.

"The causes of this increasing defalcation of revenue are manifest, and daily acquire new strength. Had the territories of Oude been subject to the frequent or occasional devastations of an enemy, had they been visited by unfavourable seasons, or by other calamities which impair the public prosperity, the rapid decline of the Vizier's revenues might be imputed to other causes than a defective administration; but no such calamitous visitations have afflicted the Province of Oude, while, in consequence of the protection which it derives from the presence of the British forces, it has been maintained, together with all the Company's possessions on this side of India in the uninterrupted enjoyment of peace. A defective administration of the Government is, therefore, the only cause which can have produced so marked a difference between the state of his Excellency's dominions and that of the contiguous territories of the Company. While the territories of the Company have been advancing progressively during the last ten years in prosperity, population, and opulence, the dominions of the Vizier, although enjoying equal advantages of tranquillity and security, have rapidly and progressively declined.

"The operation of these evils has not commenced with the government of Saadut Ali; they necessarily flow from the system of administration which existed at the period of his Excellency's accession to the Musnad. But none of these evils have dimi-

nished under his Excellency's government; on the contrary, their daily increase and aggravation are notorious, and must be progressive, to the utter ruin of the resources of Oudh, unless the vicious system of the native administration of the country be immediately abandoned. In place of inveterate and growing abuses must be substituted a wise and benevolent administration, calculated to inspire the people with confidence in the security of property and life; to encourage industry; to protect the fruits of honest labour; and to establish order and submission to the just authority of the State, on the solid foundations of gratitude for benefits received, and expectation of continual security.

"The Vizier must now be prepared for the active and decided interference of the British Government in the affairs of his country. His Excellency has repeatedly complained to me, and to the British Resident at his Court, of the ruinous condition of the internal condition of Oudh; he has repeatedly and earnestly solicited my direct interference, and has declared such interference to be indispensably necessary for the purpose of effecting a complete reform in his affairs. In the month of November, 1799, his Excellency was so convinced of the incurable defects of his government and of his own utter inability to administer it that he signified to me, in the most formal manner his deliberate determination to descend from the Musnud, and to return into private life. He solemnly avowed (not in a moment of temporary anxiety and vexation, but after the most deliberate reflection) 'that his mind was utterly withdrawn from the government of a people who were neither pleased with him nor he with them, and with whose evil dispositions, enmity, disobedience, and negligence he was completely disgusted. This resolution, so deliberately adopted, was suddenly abandoned, but the cause of so sudden a change in his Excellency's resolution cannot, unfortunately, be traced to any improvement in the general administration of the affairs, to any augmentation of his means of conducting the Government, or to the consequent establishment of reciprocal confidence and attachment between his Excellency and his people. Could any other fact be alleged to favour such an interference? it would be totally precluded by his Excellency's recent statement of the condition of his revenues, and by recent and aggravated symptoms of the most alarming disaffection towards his person and government.

"His Excellency's life has been lately attempted under circumstances of the most formidable description. Active and general support has been afforded by his subjects to the impostor who lately assumed the name of Vizier Ali; and the acknowledged temper of his Excellency's people, combined with the state of his government, exposes his situation every hour to increased anxiety, embarrassment, and hazard.

"Having maturely considered these circumstances with the attention and deliberation which the importance of the subject requires, I am satisfied that no effectual security can be provided against the ruin of the Province of Oudh, until the exclusive management of the civil and military government of that country shall be transferred to the Company, under suitable provisions for the maintenance of his Excellency and of the family. No other remedy can effect any considerable improvement in the resources of the State, or can ultimately secure its external safety and internal peace.

"Under this conviction, and with a view to preservation of the common interests of the Company and of the Vizier, I have determined to propose to his Excellency a new treaty and arrangement similar to that concluded in November, 1799, between the Company and his Highness the Rajah of Tanjore; and also conformable to the plan of the treaty proposed to his Excellency by me, in my letter of the 9th of February, 1800, at the period of his Excellency's proposed abdication of the Government. A copy of the treaty with the Rajah of Tanjore is enclosed; I desire that you will frame from the articles of that treaty, and from the treaty submitted to the Vizier in the month of December, 1799, the plan of such an arrangement, as, while it shall effectually secure all the political benefits described in the eighth paragraph of this despatch, shall also consult, as far as may be compatible with that primary object, the inclinations and prejudices of the Vizier. Having framed such a treaty, you will submit it to his Excellency, and at the same time you will earnestly exhort him to consider the propositions contained in the new arrangement with calm and dispassionate deliberation.

"If his Excellency should manifest a disposition to adopt the general frame of the proposed arrangement, but should appear desirous of introducing any particular modifications into the proposed treaty, you will receive whatever propositions his Excellency may offer for that purpose, and you will communicate them to me without delay; adding such observations as may occur to you for my further information.

"On the other hand, if his Excellency should unfortunately be persuaded by the interested councils of evil advisers absolutely to reject the proposed treaty, you will then proceed to inform his Excellency in firm, but respectful language, that the funds for the regular payment of the subsidy to the full extent of the augmented force must be placed, without a moment of delay, beyond the hazard of failure.

"For this purpose you will require his Excellency to make a cession to the Company in perpetual sovereignty of such a

portion of his territories as shall be fully adequate, in their present impoverished condition, to defray those indispensable charges. This cession must be framed upon the same principle which has formed the basis of the late treaty between his Highness the Soubahdar of the Deccan and the Company, by which his Highness has ceded to the Company in full sovereignty, a country rated at the annual revenue of sixty-two lakhs of rupees in commutation for a subsidy of about forty lakhs of rupees.

"With respect to the countries to be ceded, it is sufficiently evident that no other portion of the Vizier's dominions possesses so many political advantages as would be derived to the Company from the possession of the Doab. The cession of that province, including the tribute from Farrukhabad, must therefore be required in the first instance. In selecting the other districts which may be necessary (after deducting the charges of collection) to complete the amount of the augmented subsidy, it will be advisable to regulate the demand in such a manner as shall place the Vizier beyond the reach of foreign connections and foreign dangers. For this purpose the new possessions of the Company should be so arranged as to surround whatever territory may remain to his Excellency. With this view, the country to be required, in addition to the Doab, must be Rohilcund. The cession of these two provinces may be made with less violence to the pride and prejudices of the Vizier, inasmuch as they were actually added to the possessions of his family by the British arms. In this respect the arrangement proposed to the Vizier is similar to that concluded with the Nizam. The greater part of the countries ceded to the Company by the Nizam having been originally acquired from the power of Mysore by the assistance of the Company.

"If the present produce of these two provinces, after deducting the charges of collection, should be deemed unequal to the amount of subsidy to be defrayed, the deficiency must be sought in the countries bordering on the district of Juanpoor; and for this purpose either Azimghur or Goruckpoor, or both, must be required.

"Under such an arrangement, the territorries which would remain to the Vizier would probably be sufficiently protected by the position which the Company's troops would necessarily occupy for the defence of the ceded countries; and no division of military force would be required for the express purpose of protecting the Vizier's territory. The continuance, however, of a regiment of native infantry at Lucknow might be expedient as a protection to the person of the Vizier, and a security for the peace of the City. If any time the state of his Excellency's

"Having maturely considered these circumstances with the attention and deliberation which the importance of the subject requires, I am satisfied that no effectual security can be provided against the ruin of the Province of Oudh, until the exclusive management of the civil and military government of that country shall be transferred to the Company, under suitable provisions for the maintenance of his Excellency and of the family. No other remedy can effect any considerable improvement in the resources of the State, or can ultimately secure its external safety and internal peace.

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remaining territories should require the presence of any part of the British force, you would be empowered to issue the requisite orders for that prupose."

The Governor-General felt strongly that under the new treaty the British Government would become the instrument of restoring to affluence and prosperity one of the most fertile regions of the globe, now reduced to a condition of the most afflicting misery and desolation by the depraved administration of the native government of Oude.

Lord Wellesley stated further that the authority of the Nawab was sustained with the help of the Company's government and the misgovernment of the territories of the Nawab damaged the prestige and tarnished the fair name of the British. All that the Governor-General did was for the good name of the British nation and in the interest of the people whose welfare was adversely affected by the authority of the Nawab.

The Governor-General concluded his letter to the Directors with these words :

> "Your honourable Committee will, therefore, deem it natural, that, having frequently been reduced to the maintenance of a system of so disgraceful in its principles and ruinous in its effects. I should feel a considerable degree of satisfaction in substituting for such an administration, the salutary influence of these regulations and laws, of which I have recently witnessed and admired the practical wisdom and extensive benevolence."*

Wellesley and the Marathas

With Hyderabad, Mysore and Lucknow hooked into the subsidiary system Wellesley turned his attention towards the Marathas. "To fix the peace of India on foundations of the utmost stability, and to preclude the intrusion of the French, it is only necessary that the British Government should draw the Maratha power under its protection." Such were the views of Wellesley in 1803 on which he acted and which culminated in the Treaty of Bassein and the Second Maratha War. The desire to bring the Marathas under British protection was synonymous with the desire to extend British dominion over that part of India which had so long defied British diplomacy as well as British bayonets. The war of France which looms large as the mainspring of Wellesley's policy was a smoke-screen designed to

*Owen, Wellesley's Despatches, pp. 274-76

silence his critics by playing upon their nervousness regarding French intentions. The Governor-General's brother Arthur had no such fear of France and was of opinion that even if the French dared to land, they would be immediately cut, being far removed from their base. The evacuation of Egypt by the French and the well-known fact of their naval weakness further reduced any danger from that quarter.

The fact was that the confused state of Maratha affairs following the death of Nana Fadnis seemed to offer an opportunity for British expansion which Wellesley was loath to leave unused. The French-phobia of the times served as a ready excuse to colour his imperialism as purely defensive.

The twenty years that had elapsed between the Treaty of Salbai (1782) and the beginning of the Second Maratha War in 1803 had seen vast changes in the political condition of the English as well as the Marathas. The English had immensely increased their political strength and were within striking distance of the Marathas. The Maratha confederacy had in the meantime lost even that loose cohesion which it was the achievement of Nana Fadnis to have maintained against the disruptive and selfish interests of the Maratha chiefs. The year 1795 was the last occasion when all the Maratha houses had combined under the headship of the Peshwa against the Nizam at the battle of Kharda. The battle was a personal triumph of Nana whose prestige was immensely increased to the chagrin of the other Maratha confederates, namely the Sindhia, Holkar and Bhonsle. The rise of a Nana Fadnis from the position of a minister to that of the head of the Maratha Empire was the symptom of a fatal disease. The Nana held the Peshwa in surveillance, reducing him to the position of a nominal landlord. This produced a two-sided reaction which proved fatal to the Maratha confederacy. It produced a desire in the Peshwa to free himself from the thraldom of Nana, and on the other hand emboldened ambitious spirits like Sindhia and Holkar to subjugate the Peshwa for their own ends by ousting Nana from power. The young Peshwa Madho Rao Narayan fretting under the tutelage of Nana who would not even permit him to associate with his cousin Baji Rao, the son of the infamous Raghoba, committed suicide in October, 1795. A scramble for power ensued between Nana Fadnis and Daulat Rao Sindhia, the adopted son of Mahadji Sindhia. In the end Nana emerged triumphant with Baji Rao II, son of Raghoba as the Peshwa. But Baji Rao was a treacherous, ungrateful, intriguing man who plotted for the removal of Nana. To counteract the influence of the latter he turned to Daulat Rao Sindhia who saw in these machinations an opportunity of ousting from power his great rival. Nana was arrested and confined. Baji Rao soon discovered that

the removal of Nana only meant a change of masters and he began to plot against Sindhia. Plots and counterplots made confusion worse confounded by the struggles of Daulat Rao Sindhia and the widows of Mahadaji on the one hand and Jaswant Rao Holkar on the other. Jaswant Rao and Daulat Rao were bitter enemies of each other and while Daulat Rao was at Poona, Jaswant Rao was plundering his territories in Malwa. The appearance of Jaswant Rao in Malwa led to an insincere patching up of the differences between the Peshwa and the Sindhia and the re-appearance of Nana whom Sindhia brought back to power as a check upon the imbecile Baji Rao who was intriguing with the Nizam.

It was in this state of affairs that the Maratha politics lost the guiding hand of Nana Fadnis who died in March, 1800. Grant Duff who has written a comprehensive history of the Marathas describes him as a great statesman and Colonel Palmer, the British Resident wrote that 'with him departed all the wisdom and moderation of the Maratha Government'. This is no place to assess the credit and debit side of Nana's achievements. In a way he was great for he controlled Maratha politics for full thirty-eight years. But his actions were not always guided by the interests of the nation and history will record this as one of the causes of the fall of the Maratha Empire.

Nana's death accelerated the triangular struggle for the upper hand at Poona between Daulat Rao Sindhia, Jaswant Rao Holkar and Baji Rao II the Peshwa. A truce between Baji Rao and Daulat Rao was effected by which the former promised aid against Jaswant Rao while the latter agreed to assist the Peshwa in his policy of 'implacable revenge' against the friends of the dead Nana. While Sindhia was away fighting the forces of Holkar in Malwa, Baji Rao took it into his head to exterminate all those who had been the political opponents of himself and his father. He callously murdered Vithuji Holkar, brother of Jaswant Rao, which brought the latter to Poona to avenge his brothers Murderers. He defeated the forces of Peshwa and Sindhia in October, 1802 and entered Poona. The Peshwa fled and at last found refuge at Bassein where the English were glad to receive him. The Peshwa, a fugitive in desperate straits, agreed to enter into the subsidiary system and the Treaty of Bassein was concluded in December, 1802. Wellesley had been trying for sometime to bring the Marathas into the subsidiary system but his offers of help and mediation had so long been spurned. Now an evil fate placed the formal head of the Maratha confederacy into his hands and he determined to make the best use of his opportunity.

Terms of the treaty

The treaty was declared to be for the purpose of general defensive alliance and reciprocal protection of the territories of the Peshwa and the English East India Company and their allies respectively. For this purpose a subsidiary force of not less than 6,000 regular infantry with the usual ptoportion of field-artillery and European artillery-men were to be permanently stationed in the Peshwa's dominions. No European of any nation hostile to the English was to be entertained by the Peshwa. Districts yielding 26 lakhs of rupees were assigned for the payment of the subsidiary force, and all articles intended for the consumption of these troops were to be allowed to pass duty free. The Peshwa relinquished his claims on Surat and submitted to British arbitration the adjustment of his differences with and claims on the Nizam and the Gaikwar. The Peshwa likewise bound himself to engage in no hostilities with other States, neither to commence nor pursue in future any negotiations with any power whatever without previous consultation with the British Government. The Peshwa by the treaty slipped into the position of a subordinate at the price of protection. The formal implications of the treaty were momentus. The Peshwa was the head of the Marathas and Wakil-ul-Mutlaq or Viceregent of the Mughal Emperor. His subordination meant the subordination of the whole of Hindustan. The Emperor Shah Alam like the Peshwa was another figure head, a captive in the palace, in the hands of Sindhia who in theory was the Peshwa's daputy in Hindustan. It is in this theoretical aspect that the treaty has been described as bringing to the English the Empire of India. That Empire in fact was gained not by the treaty but by the sword. The treaty only clothed the sword with an air of legality and placed the English in more favourable circumstances than they would have been without it. Arthur Wellesley justly characterised it as a 'Treaty with a cipher' and supported it on the ground that it ensured the exclusion of the French and the peace of India. Strong criticism was levelled against it by the authorities in England. Lord Castlereagh, President of the Board of Control attacked it as it 'tended to involve us (the English) in the endless and complicated distractions of the Maratha Empire'. Mill criticised it on the ground that it produced war. Wellesley himself hoped for peace but with his usual thoroughness had made full preparations for any contingency. To the Marathas the treaty spelt the annihilation of their independence which they were not ready to acquiesce in without a struggle. But even in face of the common danger they could not sink their mutual rivalries and stand as one against the enemy. The English did their best to prevent a coalition and while Daulat Rao Sindhia and the Bhonsla Raja of Berar immediately closed their ranks, nothing

could persuade Jaswant Rao Holkar to join the alliance. He retired to Malwa and watched the course of events. When he made his appearance, it was too late. The Gaekwar throughout remained neutral.

On the 13th May, 1803, the Peshwa escorted by British troops under Arthur Wellesley re-entered Poona. Jaswant Rao Holkar who was in Poona retired to Malwa and Arthur Wellesley opened negotiations with Sindhia and Bhonsle who were encamping south of the Narbada. Negotiations fell through and Sindhia and Bhonsla refused to withdraw to their territories. On August 3, 1803, the British Agent Colonel Collins left Sindhia's camp which was the signal for war.

Wellesley was fully prepared to meet the confederate forces on all points and in their own territory. The treaties with Oudh, Nizam, Mysore, Baroda enabled Wellesley at once to throw his forces in the most vital arena of the struggle, namely Hindustan and the Deccan. So thorough were his preparations that even the objects of the war were clearly defined in anticipation of it. Those objects were the conquest of that portion of Sindhia's dominions which lay between the Ganges and the Jamuna, including the cities of Delhi and Agra, the destruction of the French forces, the acquisition of Bundelkhand and Broach in Gujarat. Further he wanted to connect Madras with Bengal by acquiring Cuttack, and lastly to secure the person of the blind Emperor Shah Alam.

From the moment Colonel Collins left Sindhia's camp events moved rapidly. The real fighting took place in the Deccan under Arthur Wellesley and in Hindustan, under General Lake with simultaneous subsidiary operations in Gujarat, Bundelkhand and Cuttack. A glance at the map will show that the strategic advantage lay from the outset with the English who were in a position to encircle the forces of Sindhia and Bhonsla and attack them on all fronts. The Marathas, leaving their old tactics fought on western lines which they had not yet fully mastered. The European officers in the service of the Marathas deserted them and passed through the English lines out of history. Their desertion was a great blow to the fighting strength of the Marathas for without them they were like sheep without the shepherd.

In the Deccan Ahmadnagar was captured in August by Arthur Wellesley and in September the combined forces of Sindhia and Bhonsle were defeated at Assaye. The Bhonsla Raja was defeated again at Argaon in November and the fortress of Gwaligarh was captured in December, 1803. News from the north was equally distressing for the Marathas and the Bhonsle stepped out of the struggle by making the treaty of Deogaon in December, 1803. With it the war in the Deccan virtually came to an end.

Operations in Hindustan, simultaneoulsy carried out, with those of the Deccan, were equally successful for the English. General Lake captured Aligarh in August and was master of Delhi and her King in September, 1803. Agra fell in October and the final battle of the war in Hindustan was fought at Laswari in November where Sindhia's battalions fought with incredible valour. 'The fellows', as Lake wrote 'fought like devils or rather heroes. Pray God I may never be in such a situation again.' On December 30th the Treaty of Surji Arjungaon with Sindhia brought the war to an end.

The treaties of Deogaon and Surji Arjungaon with Bhonsle and Sindhia considerably increased the power of the English. By the former the Bhonsla Raja agreed to receive a British Resident at Nagpur, to entertain no subjects of any country at war with the English. He gave up all his claims against the Nizam and ceded Cuttack and all territories west of the river Wardha. He however did not accept a subsidiary force and the English did not press him. Sindhia, in turn ceded all his territories between the Ganges and the Jamuna, relinquished his rights over Broach and all land north of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Gohad. He further agreed not to entertain the subjects of a country at war with English; agreed to recognise the rights of the Rajput Chiefs whom Lake had won over to his side and to receive a British Resident at his Court. By a separate treaty in February he entered into a defensive alliance with the English. Both the Bhonsla Raja and Sindhia recognised the Treaty of Bessein.

The advantages gained by the English by the war and the treaties were immense. They emerged with expanded dominions and became the supreme power in India, controlling the actions of all great Indian States.

War with Holkar

Holkar alone now remained outside the pale of the subsidiary system. Negotiations with him proved of no avail and war was declared in April, 1804 on his ravaging the territories of the Raja of Jaipur, an ally of the English. Three armies converged upon him, Lake from Hindustan, Arthur Wellesley from the Deccan and Colonel Monson from Gujarat. But before they could join, Holkar fell upon Colonel Monson in the Mukunddwaara Pass and obliged him to beat a disorderly retreat towards Agra. Monson's defeat put new hopes into Sindhia and Bhonsle, alarmed the Directors at home who determined on the recall of their war-loving Governor-General and emboldened Holkar to beseige Delhi. While Holkar was in the north, his capital of Indore fell into the hands of Colonel Murray. Lake's advance to the relief of Delhi led Holkar to abandon the siege and move down the Doab. A part

of his army was destroyed at Dig on 13th November and he himself was defeated at Farrukhabad four days later. Lake's failure to capture the fort of Bharatpur whose Jat Raja, giving up the English alliance, had joined Holkar was of little help. But it determined the ministry at home to immediately recall Wellesley. His wars had increased the Company's debt from 17 millions in 1797 to 31 millions in 1806. On 30th July, 1805, Lord Cornwallis then in his 67th year landed at Calcutta, and the forward policy of Wellesley came to an end. It has been generally held that the reversal of Wellesley's policy was a mistake, that Holkar was in measurable distance of extinction and what Hastings accomplished some years later was within sight of achievement when Cornwallis landed with instructions to reverse Wellesley's policy. It is no function of history to enter into realms of might have beens. It is clear that men in authority in England viewed with growing alarm the endless wars of Wellesley. The failure of Lake before Bharatpur and Monson's disorderly retreat had shattered the fiction of British invincibility. There were growing signs of Sindhia's uneasiness and what was feared was the resurrection of the Maratha confederacy once again. It was this which moulded the policy of Cornawallis and the ministry at home. The continuance of the war whose course or results could not have been definitely forseen was full of risks in view of the renewed Anglo-French struggle, the continued success of Napoleon and his intentions to invade England.

No sooner did Cornwallis land in India than he evinced a desire to come to terms with the Maratha Chiefs. But his death in October, 1805 which confirmed the treaty of Surji-Arjungaon with certain alterations in favour of Sindhia. The river Chambal was declared to be the boundary between the possessions of Sindhia and the Company. The forts of Gwalior and the Gohad territory were handed back to Sindhia. The engagement with the Rana of Gohad was scrapped on the ground that he was unfit to rule. A personal pension of four lakhs was granted to Sindhia and the Company undertook not to enter into treaties with the Rajput Chiefs of Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur and other tributaries of Sindhia, in Malwa, Mewar and Marwar. Similarly. the Company came to terms with Holkar by a treaty of 25th December, 1805, signed at Rajurghat on the banks of the Beas, By this treaty Holkar gave up his rights north of the Chambal, renounced his claims on Poona, Bundelkhand and on the English and their allies. The Company in turn engaged not to interfere with his possessions south of the Chambal and restored his territories in the Deccan. Despite strong objections from Lake, Barlow withdrew British protection from the States north of the Chambal from Kotah to the Jumna. These States had aided the Company against the Marathas in the hope of English

protection, but now they were abandoned once again to the mercies of the Maratha Chiefs. By the treaties with Bhonsle, Bharatpur and Machery remained intact with this alteration that Patna and Sambhalpur were given back to Bhonsle.

Estimate of Wellesley

The achievements of Wellesley were those of war or threats of war. His policy aimed at the establishment of the British authority as the central paramount power controlling the actions of all the leading States of India. In this he was eminently successful. Before he left he had by force or threats of force roped in all the leading States into subsidiary alliances with the Company. Wellesley's subsidiary alliances were not his originals, but it was he who fully developed their intent and scope. By controlling the foreign policy of the States on whom they were forced, by prohibiting the employment of subjects of any country at war with the English and by placing a subsidiary force in the very heart of the State at the expense of the State, to be used in its defence or against it, as the case may be, Wellesley established English dominance in Indian politics. The danger of a coalition of Indian States with trained armies under French officers he effectively prevented by isolating the Indian States and disbanding their trained French army. By his conquests he considerably advanced the Company's possessions bringing its frontiers to a point from whence it could with the greatest advantage meet any menace to its supremacy. His annexations were designed either to consolidate British dominions or to drive in a wedge between Indian powers so as to prevent a junction between them and to defeat it in the event of its fruition. He connected Madras with Bengal by the acquisition of Cuttack, removed all danger in Northen India by bringing Bundelkhand with all its minor chiefs under British protection thus making them interested in the maintenance of British power. His annexations of the State of Mysore surrounded that State with British territory from whence the Marathas or the Nizam both be dealt with at the least sign of hostility. By the installation of a Hindu dynasty on the throne of Mysore he effectively prevented the possibility that may have existed of a coalition of the Muslim States of Tipu and the Nizam. He confined each Maratha State within distinct boundaries interposing between them either British territorics of a non-Maratha State under British protection. Above all by taking possessions of the Imperial city of Delhi and the blind Emperor Shah Alam be gained for the Company the imperial fication which the Marathas had so profitably used. With the Emperor a pensioner of the Company and his Wakil-i-Mutluq the Peshwa in a subordinate alliance, Wellesley could justly claim to have established British paramountcy in India.

Wellesley's subsidiary alliances have been described as weapons of peaee and his wars as those of necessity. The peace which he secured was the peace of the grave. The victim of his alliances was deprived of all initiative, of every desire for improvement, so that he sank in his own esteem. The large portions of the revenues of the States that went to support the subsidary force left little for works of development. The administration in which the prince lost all interest rapidly drifted into confusion and chaos, which whenever necessary was used as a pretext for interference not in the interest of the subjects but for the further expansion of the British power. The interests of the subjects were completely disregarded. The prince had no ears for their wailings. Rebellion, the corrective of tyranny, was denied to them. The English kept aloof on the plea of non-interference in internal affairs. They had no love for their prosperity except to fleece them of their gold. Like beasts of burden they lived their lives, became wretched and miserable.

From the English point of view the alliances did establish peace, by isolating the States and controlling their foreign policy. The system was the surest method of establishing British dominance. It increased the military power of the Company at the expense of the State, reduced the military establishment of the prince and obtained for the Company a sure foothold within the State itself from which position it could even strike at the prince at the least signs of restiveness. By annexing territory in lieu of the subsidy Wellesley made the force independent of the State itself in addition to increasing the resources of the Company. The situation of the prince, melancholy in the extreme, was not without its humour. A force was kept by him at his expense but commanded by others and ready to pounce upon his neck whenever occasion so demanded.

For full seven years Wellesley waged war in India in one quarter or another. His wars were not of necessity but of aggrandizement. They were of necessity only if it be conceded that the expansion of British dominion in India was necessary. Conscious of his own strength and the weakness of his opponents, he behaved like a bully grabbing the sweets of the weaker boys. If the law of the jungle is to be applauded, Wellesley stands forth as one of the builders of the British Empire in India. To the princes and peoples of India he stands forth as an autocrat who took advantage of their weakness, deprived them of their independence and killed their spirit. Such was the opinion of Thomas Munro who in his able minute srongly condemned Wellesley's system. But then, probably the weak have no place in this world. The day India learns this, she will have learnt her lesson of history.